NATION

Heatwave alert in Delhi as temp touches 44 degrees

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BUSINESS

India, New Zealand to sign free trade pact on 27 April

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SPORTS

Bowlers floor CSK to help GT get back on track

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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AAP submits petition to RS to remove 7 MPs

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh has submitted a petition to Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan requesting the disqualification of seven MPs who recently left the party and merged with the BJP. Singh claimed their move violated the anti-defection law and said the party would pursue legal action if necessary. The seven MPs, including Raghav Chadha and Swati Maliwal, allegedly betrayed AAP after being elected on its tickets. Singh cited Supreme Court judgments and the 10th Schedule of the Constitution, emphasising that such defections could lead to disqualification. He rejected claims that some Punjab AAP MLAs were in contact with the BJP. *—PTI*

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Jharkhand cops rescue 3 boys trafficked to B'luru

RANCHI, 26 APRIL

Three boys aged 14-15, allegedly being trafficked to Bengaluru, were rescued at Hatia railway station by the Railway Police Force (RPF). During a special anti-human trafficking drive, a 27-year-old man was arrested. He admitted to sending labourers to Bengaluru construction sites with a commission of Rs 300-400 per worker, and claimed involvement in trafficking children from various states for the construction purpose. The boys, from Jhalda in Purulia district of West Bengal, said the man was taking them under the pretext of employment. The accused was handed over to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, while the boys were sent to a shelter. *—PTI*

14-year-old Mysuru boy dies after snakebite

MYSURU, 26 APRIL

A 14-year-old boy died after being bitten by snake at snake at Kampalapura in Periyapatna taluk on Sunday. According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Venkatesh son of Mahadevu of Kampalapura town. He was bitten by snake when he was putting paddy straws on cattle shed at his house. The snake hid in straw bundle and bit him when he opened it. Although he was rushed to a nearby government general hospital, he breathed his last unable to respond to the treatment, police said. *-Salar News*

>>>Kerala snake bite on Page 4

Import of Russian oil is confidential, says CIC

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has upheld the Petroleum Ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) decision to deny details of Russia crude oil imports to India, citing confidentiality and strategic interests. An RTI plea seeking company-wise import data from June 2022 to June 2025 was rejected, with the CPIO stating the information was exempt under RTI Act sections 8(1)(d) and (a). The CIC agreed, noting disclosure could harm the country's strategic and economic interests, and affect foreign relations. The Commission also issued a show-cause notice to the PPAC official, urging compliance with RTI. *—PTI*

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Trump cheats death again

One injured as armed man fires shots at White House event

WASHINGTON, 26 APRIL

US President Donald Trump and other top White House officials were evacuated unharmed from the annual dinner of White House correspondents after a man armed with multiple weapons fired shots outside the ballroom of the hotel.

The incident took place at around 8.34pm local time when dinner was served. At that time, Trump was seen having a conversation with Weijia Jiang, the President of the White House Correspondents' Association, and mentalist Oz Pearlman, who was scheduled to present a show at the marquee event at the Washington Hilton.

Secret Service officials and other security personnel quickly covered the President, First Lady Melania Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and the Second Lady Usha Vance, who were seated at the head table, and escorted them out of the ballroom.

The accused, Cole Tomas Allen, was aprehended after attempting to break into the annual dinner of White House correspondents *—TRUTH SOCIAL*

Several guests at the dinner, including leaders across the political spectrum, journalists and other invitees, ducked under tables in panic.

Hours after the event, Trump addressed a press conference at the White House, and announced that security personnel had captured accused 31-year-old Cole Tomas Allen who hails from California.

"It was a pretty loud noise, and it was from quite far away. He (the attacker) hadn't reached the area at all. They really got him," Trump said.

Trump said one security officer was shot at, but wasn't in danger as he was wearing a bulletproof vest.

Asked how the incident impacts him as the President, Trump said: "I like not to think about it. I lead a pretty normal life, considering, you know, it's a dangerous life".

The gunman who tried to breach the ballroom at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner is believed to have been targeting members of the Trump administration, acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said later on Sunday.

Blanche also said officials believe that the suspect travelled by train from California to Chicago and then on to Washington, where he checked in as a guest to the hotel. *—PTI*

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We had some great work done by law enforcement, but in light of this evening's events, I ask that all Americans recommit with their hearts in resolving our differences peacefully... Republicans (and) Democrats

-Donald Trump, US President

Relieved to learn that President Trump, the First Lady and Vice President are safe and unharmed following the recent security incident at a Washington DC hotel. I extend my best wishes for their continued safety and well-being. Violence has no place in a democracy and must be unequivocally condemned

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

4 BABIES AMONG 6 HOSPITALISED

Swiss plane aborts take-off in Delhi after engine fire

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

A Zurich-bound Swiss International Airlines' plane carrying 245 people aborted take-off at the Delhi airport on Sunday at 1 am due to an engine fire. This led to an emergency and passengers were evacuated on the runway, sources said.

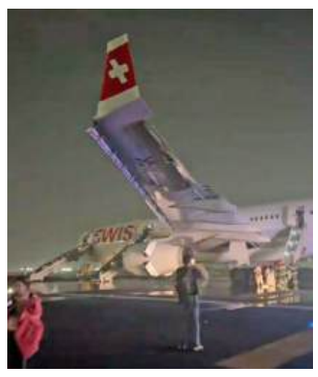
Some passengers suffered minor injuries, one of the sources said while the airline said six passengers, including four infants, were receiving medical attention. Details about how they passengers suffered injuries could not be immediately ascertained.

There were 232 passengers, including four infants, and 13 crew members aboard the A330-300 aircraft with registration HB-JHK operating flight LX147.

The sources said smoke was observed from the port side of the main wheel.

Delhi airport operator DIAL said the operations at the airport remained unaffected.

"Shortly after take-off, just after 1am IST, an issue occurred with one of the engines. The crew aborted the take-off and decided to evacuate the aircraft," the spokesperson said.



Smoke was observed on the port side of the plane *—SCREENGRABS*

The incident comes close on the heels of the Air India Flight 171 crash in Ahmedabad, where the Boeing 787-8 plane crashed shortly after takeoff, killing at least 270 people.

Only one passenger survived. *— PTI*

DKS seeks Rs 5,000 cr for 1,082 dvpt projects

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said the State government has submitted 1,082 urban development projects to the Centre under the Urban Challenge Fund, with a total estimated cost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore.

He returned from a two-day visit to New Delhi, where met several Union Ministers, and requested the Centre to "enhance the allocation beyond Rs 5,500 crore and extend support to ongoing and tendered projects as well," he said in a statement on X.

"We have submitted project proposals worth Rs 1.25 lakh crore, for which the Central government needs to contribute approximately Rs 32,000– Rs 35,000 crore. I have therefore requested more. I also said that if other states do not avail this grant, we are ready to take it," Shivakumar, who is also the Bengaluru Development Minister, added.

Shivakumar had met Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Delhi, among others. *—Salar News*

TCS WORLD RUN

People take part in the annual TCS World 10K run, in Bengaluru, on Sunday. At least 30,000 people particpated, including prominent athletes and politicians - *MOHAMMED ASAD* *>>>MORE ON PAGE 8*

Shivamogga teen attacked; weapon lodged in skull

SHIVAMOGGA, 26 APRIL

A 17-year-old boy was severely injured after being attacked by an armed gang in Shivamogga city on Saturday night. The assault, believed to be linked to a personal dispute possibly involving a girl, resulted in a near-fatal injury, with a weapon lodged in his skull. The incident happened at 3rd Cross, Wadi-e-Hudha.

Preliminary reports indicate the accused intercepted the minor and launched a brutal attack using a long, sharp-edged weapon. The force of the blow caused the weapon to become lodged in the boy's head.

The victim collapsed in a pool of blood and was rushed immediately by bystanders to a nearby private hospital, where he is receiving emergency treatment and is currently critical. A case has been registered at Tunganagar Police Station in Shivamogga.

The police have launched a search operation for the accused. *—Salar News*

Akhilesh likens Ghazipur teen's death to Hathras gangrape

LUCKNOW, 26 APRIL

- In the Hathras gangrape, a Dalit girl was sexually assaulted by 4 men in 2020, with allegations that the UP government attempted to cover up the incident

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday hit out against the BJP led Uttar Pradesh government over the recovery of a teenage girl's body in Ghazipur, likening it to 2020 Hathras case in which a Dalit girl was allegedly gangraped and who later died in Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital.

Sharing a video of the victim's father on X, Yadav said, "Changing statements does not change the truth. Uttar Pradesh has never seen such a weak chief minister, under whose watch poor and helpless victims are pressured to alter their statements."

Reacting to the SP chief's remarks, BJP leader Naveen Srivastava said in a post on X, "You have no faith in the administration, no faith in the post-mortem report, and no faith in the victim's father. You only believe in divisive politics."

Varanasi Zone ADGP, Piyush Mordia, said the girl had gone missing on the night of 14 April, and her body was found about 3 km from her home in the Ganga early the next morning.

Based on a complaint filed by the family, an FIR has been registered, and the main accused has been arrested, the officer said. *—PTI*

BEHIND INDIA'S ICONIC IMAGES

Raghu Rai, who photographed India's many shades, no more

Raghu Rai's 'Burial of an Unknown Child', encapsulated the horror of the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984 *—RAGHU RAI FOUNDATION*

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Raghu Rai, one of India's best-known photographers who distilled the essence of an evolving India and its people through his lens, died at a private hospital here in the early hours of Sunday. He was 83.

"Dad was diagnosed with prostate cancer two years ago but he was cured. Then it spread to the stomach, that too was cured. Recently, the cancer spread to his brain and then there were age-related issues too," said Nitin Rai, photographer and Rai's son. His last rites were performed on Sunday.

He is survived by wife Gurmeet, son Nitin and daughters Lagan, Avani and Purvai. Born on 18 December, 1942, in Jhang, Punjab (now in Pakistan), Rai was qualified as a civil engineer and only took up photography at 23 before joining The Statesman newspaper as its chief photographer in 1966.

Raghu Rai

Over the next six decades, Rai's lens froze for posterity fleeting moments with unmatched clarity, documenting a growing India's socio-political landscape.

The prolific photographer, a protege of Henri Cartier-Bresson, shot some of the most significant events in Indian modern history, including the Bangladesh refugee crisis of 1972 and the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984.

One of the most haunting images that came out of the Bhopal disaster is that of an infant, eyes open in a cold gaze, as a hand caresses the child. *—PTI*

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GROUP OF TEEN BOYS RESCUE 7 PUPPIES FROM WILDFIRE

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 26 APRIL

A group of boys saved seven puppies from a wildfire at Puttathimmanahalli village on the outskirts of Chikkaballapur on Friday afternoon.

The wildfire had broken out across four to five acres of land in the village. The fire was threatening to spread to adjacent farmland where farmers were growing guava and pomegranate, among other fruits.

The boys noticed a dog barking in distress, as if seeking help. Upon searching, they spotted the dog moving helplessly near a bush. When they peered into the bush, they could hear the feeble sounds of several puppies grow louder.

The boys bravely ventured into the bush and rescued all seven puppies just minutes before the fire engulfed it. The puppies were later reunited with their mother, who immediately began nursing them.

Halasidda, a fire personnel attached to the Chikkaballapur unit, said they received information about the fire in the afternoon, around 3 PM. After which, fire tenders rushed to the spot soon after.

Halasidda recounted that the fire had engulfed a large area of land—including farmland. Personnel deployed eight hose pipes to douse it in an operation that took nearly one and a half hours. *—Salar News*

Gunshots fired at advocate's home in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 26 APRIL

Unidentified assailants fired shots at an advocate's residence in Belagavi, causing widespread panic. The incident happened at Bhaghyodaya Layout on Mandoli Road in Belagavi taluk on 24 April at approximately 2.30pm. The house belongs to advocate Pooja Sanjay Kakatkar (Patil). Miscreants reportedly shot at a first-floor window before fleeing. Her 15-year-old daughter was inside reading and escaped unharmed. Police suspect professional rivalry is likely motive. The incident remained undisclosed until Sunday, with authorities initially silent. A case has been registered at Belagavi Rural Police Station under various provisions.—*SALAR NEWS*

Fire at govt hospital destroys Rs 1 cr equipment

HAVERI, 26 APRIL

A major fire broke out at a government hospital in Hangal taluk, Haveri district, on Saturday night. Initial police reports state the blaze erupted on the second floor. Investigation suggests the fire was caused by a short circuit in electrical supply. Medicines and equipment estimated to worth about Rs 1 crore have been destroyed. Fire and emergency services personnel rushed to the spot to bring the blaze under control. Fortunately, no patients were harmed. A case has been registered at Hangal Police Station, and further investigation into the cause of the fire is currently underway.—*SALAR NEWS*

— PTI

Kammanahalli gets a new Dr Rajkumar Park

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Energy Minister KJ George has inaugurated Dr Rajkumar Park in Kammanahalli and dedicated the newly constructed open-air theatre to the public. "The newly built open-air theatre will serve as a platform for various community programs. Other parks in the constituency will also be renovated and beautified further," George said, according to a release from his office. George also visited the Hennur Biodiversity Park, where he reviewed ongoing sustainable development works and instructed the Range Forest Officer and the Assistant Conservator of Forests to implement drip irrigation systems to enhance the green cover in the area.—*SALAR NEWS*

DKS visits Minister Sudhakar at KIMS hospital

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar visited Minister for Planning and Statistics D Sudhakar at KIMS hospital in the City where he is receiving treatment for a lung infection. The hospital's statement said Sudhakar remains stable on life support, with the possibility of lung transplantation if his condition does not improve. Since his transfer on 20 April from Manipal Hospital, Yeshwanthpur, he has been on ECLS (Extracorporeal Life Support). —*PTI*

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TDP supporters heckle comedian for joke on Naidu

Sought Sarat Uday's apology for 2-yr-old joke on AP CM

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Supporters of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) head and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu allegedly heckled Hyderabad based stand-up comedian Sarat Uday at his show here in Kormangala on Saturday over a two-year old video in which he had cracked jokes on their leaders.

Around 7 PM, in the middle of Sarat's show, a group of agitated supporters of the TDP leader reportedly stood up and walked up on to the stage to confront the comic artist for his video on Naidu.

He had reportedly uploaded the said video two years ago and for which after furious protest from TDP supporters he had issued a public apology then.

On Saturday evening, the TDP supporters however asked Sarat to once again apologise before the audience over his two-year-old video and warned him of dire consequences if he ever dared to do the same in his future shows.

TDP supporters disrupt show of stand up comedian Sarat Uday in Bengaluru. —*x*

In the video recording of the incident one of supporter was heard saying, "I'm your fan, you do comedy very well. But in one show, you insulted our leader." Then a group of five people were seen threatening Sarat on stage.

But when the miscreants asked the artist to shout 'Jai TDP' which he refused to do that the TDP supporters got very angry. They abused the artist in front of the audience. When they tried to go back to their seats, Sarat asked them to leave the show.

The alleged TDP supporters demanded refund for the ticket they claimed they had purchased for the show. But when they were asked to show their tickets they could not do so and abruptly left the show before the police could reach the spot of the incident.

This is the third incident in which comedians were threatened or arrested for jokes on politicians from the ruling parties in Andhra Pradesh. Prior to this, comedians Anudeep Katikala and Rafiq Muhammed were booked and arrested by the AP Police for similar jokes. —*PTI*

Chitradurga reeling under intense heatwave

CHITRADURGA, 26 APRIL

Chitradurga in central Karnataka is experiencing a steady rise in temperatures, with residents grappling with intense heat, hot winds and harsh sunlight that have disrupted normal life across the region.

Known for its historic forts and rocky landscape, the district is witnessing unusually severe hot weather conditions this season, with maximum temperatures hovering around 39 degrees Celsius over the past week, and forecast to continue for the next few days, according to the Indian Meteorological Department.

Residents said that many people are avoiding stepping out between 10 am and 4 pm due to extreme heat conditions.

Chitradurga is witnessing severe hot weather conditions with maximum temperatures hovering around 39 degrees Celsius —*REPRESENTATIVE*

Cases of dehydration, dizziness and fatigue have also been reported, particularly among students, college-goers and tourists visiting the forts.

Locals said that the rising temperatures have forced them to rely heavily on water, buttermilk and fruit juices to cope with the heat. Many expressed concern over the worsening situation and the impact it is having on daily activities.

Sheema Kausher, Associate Professor at Government Science College, Chitradurga, said that the temperature levels this year are notably higher compared to previous years, making outdoor conditions more challenging.

Another Associate Professor of Mathematics from Government Science College, Ramesh Bhat, said the lack of rainfall has further aggravated the situation, causing health concerns among residents and forcing them to remain indoors during peak heat hours. Authorities urged all to take precaution. —*ANI*

Three goods vehicle carrying 23 cattle allegedly on their way to a slaughterhouse were intercepted —*REPRESENTATIVE*

Illegal cattle smuggling racket busted in Bidar

BIDAR, 26 APRIL

Illegal cattle smuggling racket has been unearthed in Bidar district with BJP MLA Sharanu Salagar conducting a sudden raid on three goods vehicle carrying 23 cattle allegedly on their way to a slaughterhouse.

The raid by the BJP MLA from Basavakalyan constituency on Sunday morning has brought to fore the alleged rampant illegal transportation of cattle in the district. All the cattle have been rescued

The raid took place near Chitta Cross in Manthala village of Basavakalyan taluk in Bidar district. Acting on credible information that cattle were being transported illegally in three goods vehicles, Sharanu Salagar rushed to the spot and intercepted the vehicles.

Upon inspection, it was found that cows, calves, bulls, and buffalo calves were crammed into the vehicles without following even basic regulations, leaving them gasping for air. In one vehicle alone six large animals were packed tightly, leading to the death of a bull.

Sharanu Salagar reprimanded the drivers for their ill treatment to the animals. He accused the Congress led Karnataka government of giving a free hand to such operators. —*Salar News Service*

TWO ARRESTED FOR THEFT OF 20 TWO-WHEELERS IN BENGALURU

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Two people involved in two-wheeler thefts were arrested, and 20 vehicles worth Rs 15 lakhs were recovered from them, police said on Sunday. According to police, the action followed a complaint by a resident of Varahasandra within the jurisdiction of Bengaluru's Talaghattapura Police Station on 21 March.

A complaint was registered, stating that on the night of 20 March, the complainant had parked his two-wheeler near Yellamma Temple. Upon returning, he found the vehicle missing.

Police caught two suspects on 16 April near NICE Road on a two-wheeler. They also disclosed that the stolen vehicles were hidden at different locations, police said in a release. Both the accused were produced before the court and have been remanded to judicial custody.

With the arrest of the accused, police have solved 20 two-wheeler theft cases across Bengaluru. The investigation led to the recovery of three vehicles under the Talaghattapura Police Station, two under Konanakunte, and one from Girinagar, Commercial Street, Banashankari, Tilaknagar, Bandepalya, Rajarajeshwari nagar, Hanumanthanagar, Bharathi nagar, besides five other cases from various stations across the city. —*PTI*

AESTHETIC MAKEOVER

Volunteers paint an underpass on Millers Road in Bengaluru on Sunday. This is part of the beautification near Cantonment Railway station —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

20 injured in bus accident

MANGALURU, 26 APRIL

More than 20 passengers were injured after a private bus overturned at a bend in the Charmadi Ghat on Sunday, police said.

The accident occurred at a curve when the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle.

The passengers, all from Andhra Pradesh, were returning after attending a wedding in Dharmasthala.

Those seriously injured were shifted to Wenlock District Hospital, while others with minor injuries were treated at nearby private hospitals.

Residents assisted in the rescue operations. Traffic police from Belthangady visited the spot and are investigating the incident. —*PTI*

VICTIMS WERE STUDENTS

Bengaluru police nab 6 in dacoity case

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Six people were arrested from Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore district in connection with a dacoity case in Bengaluru, police said on Sunday.

The police seized two two-wheelers, four mobile phones, and two laptops worth Rs 3 lakh from the accused.

The accused allegedly trespassed into a house here and threatened the occupants with deadly weapons, earlier this month.

According to police, the complainant, a resident of Pavamana Nagar within the limits of Konanakunte Police Station, submitted a complaint on 18 April. He was a college student, originally from Kerala. He, along with six other students, resided in the house and all were pursuing studies at the same college.

- During the investigation, the police conducted inquiries from various angles and gathered credible information through informants, an official release said, adding, the accused were later picked up from Coimbatore

On the night of 17 April, around late hours, six unknown persons aged between 20-25 years unlawfully entered the house.

They assaulted the occupants with their hands and a knife, causing bleeding injuries, threatened them, and robbed them of Rs 10,000 cash, four mobile phones, two laptops, and a two-wheeler, they said, adding that based on the complaint, a dacoity case was registered.

During the investigation, the police conducted inquiries from various angles and gathered credible information through informants. The an official release said, adding, the accused were later picked up from Coimbatore.

"Upon interrogation, all six accused confessed to their involvement in the offence," police said. The six accused were produced before a court, which remanded them to judicial custody, they added.—*PTI*

Teen rescues 10-year-old at Someshwara Beach

MANGALURU, 26 APRIL

A teenager rescued a 10-year-old boy who was being swept away by strong waves at Someshwara Beach, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred in Mangaluru on Saturday evening.

According to officials, 10-year-old Muhammad Arshaman, a resident of Vitla Megginapete, had come to the beach with his family when he was caught in a strong current.

Noticing the situation, Muhammad Ismail Faiz, 16, immediately jumped into the sea to rescue him. Faiz battled the waves for about 10 minutes before managing to bring Arshaman to safety. Local swimmers also assisted in the rescue. Faiz said that he knew how to swim, which gave him the confidence to attempt the rescue.

Following the rescue, Faiz briefly lost consciousness due to exhaustion. He was later admitted to a private hospital in the city and is recovering. Arshaman is also reported to be out of danger, police said.

Both Arshaman and Faiz are relatives and had visited the beach with their families when the incident occurred. Faiz recently passed the SSLC examination and secured second place in a state-level karate competition. —*PTI*

Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, DCM DK Shivakumar at award presentation for TCS World 10K run in City on Sunday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Won't speak about leadership: DKS

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday said he won't speak about the alleged power tussle with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, adding that both leaders will abide by any decision taken by the party High Command.

Speaking to reporters after returning from Delhi, Shivakumar said: "I will not speak about political issues before the media. I have already said that when the time comes you will get to know. So I will not tell you." He was responding to a question on whether he discussed the power tussle with party leaders.

He added that he has full faith that the High Command will take a decision at the appropriate time.

The remarks comes amid speculations about a possible leadership change and cabinet reshuffle after 4 May, when the results for bypoll elections to two assembly segments in the State are announced.

Responding to a question on senior Minister Satish Jarkiholi's reported statement about internal differences, the Deputy CM said, "There are no issues, we have faith in our party (High Command), they will do what they have to".

> **CM Siddaramaiah has planned to portray Deputy CM DK Shivakumar as an opponent of the Dalit community...It has been three years since the government was formed. What work has it done for the non-Muslims? No money has been given to the non-Muslim boards**
>
> -R Ashoka, LoP

Asked about the issue of leadership change as the government is about to complete three years in office, Shivakumar said, "... I have never discussed this issue. The CM and I have both said that we will accept whatever and whenever the high command decides, and we will abide by it."

He declined to comment when asked whether any "good news" can be expected by his birthday on 15 May. He also said cases would be registered if illegal flex banners are put up ahead of his birthday. —*PTI*

‘BJP stands for women, TMC backs goons’

PM: BJP giving ticket to RG Kar rape victim’s mom proves its commitment to women’s safety

BONGAON, 26 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused the TMC of “sheltering goons who torture women”, and said the BJP giving poll tickets to the mother of the RG Kar victim is proof of the party’s commitment to ensuring women’s security.

Speaking at the Matua community citadel of Thakurnagar at Bongaon in North 24 Parganas district, Modi also said all refugees who took shelter in India following religious persecution in the neighbouring nation will be granted citizenship through procedures outlined under the Citizenship Amendment Act.

The BJP has fielded Rekha Patra from Hingalganj, and Ratna Debnath, mother of the RG Kar hospital doctor who was raped and murdered, from Panihati – in the Assembly elections.

Sandeshkhali hogged the national limelight in 2024, after allegations of sexual abuse of women by local TMC leaders came to the fore. The RG Kar hospital incident also took place that year.

The Matua community is a largely Hindu Namasudra Scheduled Caste group in Bengal, originating from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), who migrated to the state facing religious persecution. They are believed to hold sway in around 70 Assembly seats.

The recent SIR exercise allegedly resulted in significant number of voter deletions from the community.

The Prime Minister also offered prayers at the main shrine of the politically influential Matua community in Thakunagar and at the historic Thanthania Kali temple in Kolkata on Sunday.

Modi also alleged that even the smallest of politicians as well as goons consider themselves the government under the Trinamool Congress regime in Bengal.

Modi accused the Mamata Banerjee dispensation of gross inaction in cases involving trafficking of women from the state, and stated that the BJP government would stand for women’s empowerment.

In the Bangladesh-bordering region of Bongaon, he also warned all infiltrators, “who illegally sneaked in with false documents”, to leave the country before 29 April or else they will be deported after the polls—*PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays obeisance at the main shrine of Matua community in Kolkata on Sunday—*PTI*

> **In West Bengal today, it is not democracy but TMC's reign of terror that prevails. Intimidating, attacking, and eliminating opposing voices after votes are cast has become the defining character of TMC**
>
> -Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

100 crude bombs found in TMC worker's home

KOLKATA, 26 APRIL

Police on Sunday recovered around 100 crude bombs from the house of a person, allegedly a TMC worker, in Bhangar’s South 24 Parganas district, days ahead of the second phase of the assembly polls in West Bengal. In response, the Election Commission issues a ‘stern message to, “The Commissioner of Police, Kolkata, all DCPs, SPs, OC and IC officers, that if any such explosives are used by any person in their jurisdiction, the concerned officer will face action.” Surveillance would be intensified in vulnerable pockets to ensure that voters can exercise their franchise without fear, an official added. Bhangar will vote during the second phase of voting scheduled on 29 April. —*PTI*

WB records 93.19% voter turnout in first phase: EC

KOLKATA, 26 APRIL

The first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections recorded a voter turnout of 93.19 per cent, the highest ever in the state, the Election Commission said on Saturday. Polling for the first phase was on 23 April, across 152 assemblies in 16 districts. Of the 3.36 crore registered voters, 3.61 crore voted. Of those who voted, 1.65 crore were women and 1.71 crore were men, the EC added. The previous highest turnout was 84.72 per cent, recorded in 2011, in which the TMC stormed to power, ending the CPI(M)-led Left Front’s 34-year rule. This election is being held following the SIR exercise in the state, in which over 90 lakh names were struck off the electoral rolls. —*PTI*

EC orders probe into intimidation of Diamond Harbour voters

The Election Commission on Sunday ordered a probe after a video purportedly showing bike-borne men intimidating locals in the Diamond Harbour Assembly constituency ahead of the second phase of polls in West Bengal surfaced on social media. EC also lodged complaint at the Diamond Harbour Police Station. Officials said a case has been registered and an investigation is underway. The state government earlier suspended five officers and initiated disciplinary proceedings against them for alleged "serious misconduct" and failure to maintain neutrality. —*PTI*

Mamata leads 'padyatra' in Kolkata’s hot seat Bhabanipur

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday led a 'padyatra' in her Bhabanipur Assembly constituency in south Kolkata, accompanied by thousands of party supporters, as the election campaign entered its final phase. Amid the playing of the song 'Jotoi Koro Hamla Abar Jitbe Bangla' (No matter how much you attack, Bengal will triumph), Banerjee interacted with people from Lansdown Crossing to Kalighat Fire Services Station. She even stopped security personnel from removing those who touched her feet during the colourful road show. —*PTI*

TMC, BJP workers exchange blows in Howrah, Haroa

Violence was reported in Howrah and Haroa in West Bengal, a senior police official said on Sunday. Clashes broke out in Howrah during a BJP roadshow for Umesh Rai after TMC supporters raised “Joy Bangla” slogans, prompting BJP backers to counter with “Jai Shri Ram.” On Saturday, a police official was injured while trying to pacify TMC

during an Indian Secular Front roadshow in Haroa. Both ISF and TMC alleged that several supporters were injured in the clash. —*PTI*

EC to hold meeting ahead of 2nd phase polls in Bengal

KOLKATA, 26 APRIL

A high-level coordination meeting involving poll officials, police officers and commanders of central forces from three election districts under Kolkata will take place here on Sunday to review preparedness for the upcoming second phase of the West Bengal assembly polls.

The meeting, scheduled at the Dhana Dhanya Auditorium, comes three days before the polling, scheduled on 29 April.

"The meeting has been convened to assess the overall preparedness in the election districts under Kolkata and ensure smooth coordination among all agencies involved in the polling process," a senior official said.

According to the official, the meeting will be attended by the commissioner of Kolkata police, district election officers of Kolkata Uttar, Kolkata Dakshin and South 24 Parganas, along with general, police and expenditure observers deputed by the Election Commission.

Company commanders of central armed police forces (CAPFs) and returning officers of constituencies in the Kolkata region are also expected to be present, he said.

"The focus will be on deployment of forces, vulnerability mapping, communication between civil and police administration and the final readiness of polling personnel," the official said.

The review assumes significance as the state recorded a turnout of over 93 per cent in the first phase of polling held on 23 April, when voting was conducted in 152 Assembly constituencies spread across 16 districts of West Bengal.

Incidentally, the poll body has been holding similar review meetings in different districts across the state to ensure free, fair and peaceful polling in the two-phase Assembly elections being held in West Bengal. —*PTI*

Vijay asks candidates to inspect strong rooms in TN

CHENNAI, 26 APRIL

Aadhav Arjuna, a leader of the Tamil Velu Kazhagam (TVK), announced that party Chief Vijay has instructed all candidates in the 23 April Tamil Nadu Assembly elections to inspect the strong rooms housing EVMs on a rotation basis, to ensure their safety and security.

The elections for 234 constituencies took place with a record voter turnout of over 85 per cent, after which the Electronic Voting Machines were transferred to secure strong rooms.

Arjuna, who is contesting from Villivakkam in Chennai, revealed that Vijay has advised candidates to visit the strong rooms three times daily in their respective areas.

He called on election officials to guarantee transparency during the vote count, highlighting that although security measures are in place, the small size of counting rooms necessitates adequate time for each round and accurate announcements.

Arjuna further urged authorities to provide sufficient security on counting day, 4 May, to maintain law and order.

Responding to speculation about Vijay’s possible visit to Australia like other leaders, including DMK chief MK Stalin, Arjuna said the TVK founder remains actively involved in party activities. He expressed confidence in a victory for TVK. —*PTI*

AAP files plea to oust 7 'defector' RS MPs

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has lodged a formal plea with the Rajya Sabha Chairman, seeking the disqualification of seven MPs who recently defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The party alleges their departure violates the anti-defection law, asserting they were elected on AAP tickets and later abandoned the party.

Sanjay Singh, an AAP MP, disclosed that the petition has been submitted to Chairman CP Radhakrishnan, with the party considering legal action if necessary.

Singh claimed that the move by the MPs contravenes the 10th Schedule of the Constitution, citing Supreme Court judgments that clarify such defections could lead to disqualification.

The seven MPs, Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Sandeep Pathak, Harbhajan Singh, Rajendra Gupta, Vikram Sahni, and Swati Maliwal, resigned on Friday, merging with the BJP.They said that AAP had strayed from its principles., which led to their decision to join the BJP.

Six of these MPs hailed from Punjab. Singh rejected BJP’s allegations of false propaganda and stated that public protests against the defectors are ongoing in Punjab.

Meanwhile, Chandigarh-based MP Balbir Singh Seechewal condemned the defections, calling them “bewafai” (disloyalty). Seechewal revealed that Sahney approached him to join an ‘Azaad group’ for Punjab’s issues but he refused.

He criticised the defectors’ failure to perform their duties, stating, “They had a responsibility towards the party which sent them to the Upper House, and they should have fulfilled it.” —*PTI*

Harbhajan’s security cover withdrawn

The Punjab Police has withdrawn the security cover of Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh, one of the seven lawmakers who switched to the BJP from AAP alongside Raghav Chadha. The police security cover comprising 9-10 policemen was withdrawn on 25 April from the former cricketer's residence at the Chhotti Baradari locality in Jalandhar. Meanwhile, security personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force could be seen deployed outside his residence on Sunday. AAP workers held protests outside his residence. —*PTI*

—WIKIPEDIA

Case filed over threats to Vijayan’s security officer

T’PURAM, 26 APRIL

A case has been registered and a probe launched into social media posts allegedly threatening a member of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan’s security team, officials said on Sunday. Following the conclusion of the state assembly election on 9 April, several social media posts allegedly made by Congress, Youth Congress and KSU activists claimed that revenge would be taken if LDF is removed and UDF comes to power. The Thiruvananthapuram City Cyber Police registered the case based on a complaint filed by the Chief Minister’s security staff. According to the FIR, the complainant’s photograph and name were used in several posts on social media platforms, threatening him with consequences and containing abusive language.—*PTI*

Khera moves SC after HC denies anticipatory bail

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Congress leader Pawan Khera on Sunday moved the Supreme Court against an order of Gauhati High Court which rejected his anticipatory bail petition in connection with his allegations that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife possessed multiple passports and undisclosed properties abroad. According to the apex court case status, the matter is yet to be assigned to a bench. The Gauhati High Court had rejected Khera’s anticipatory bail application. The Telangana High Court had earlier granted Khera a seven-day transit anticipatory bail, but the Assam Police moved the Supreme Court against it. SC passed an interim order to stay the grant of anticipatory transit bail and asked Khera to approach the Gauhati High Court. —*PTI*

VETTING IS MANDATORY

Parl panel shocked; NMC issues rules without Law Ministry’s nod

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

A parliamentary committee has said it was “taken aback” to find that crucial regulations issued by the National Medical Commission were not vetted by the Law Ministry, an essential prerequisite to prevent future infirmities.

In its report on ‘Infirmities in the regulations framed under the National Medical Commission Act’, the Lok Sabha Committee on Subordinate Legislation said getting draft rules and regulations vetted by the Law Ministry from the legal, constitutional and drafting point of view is essential.

The report was tabled in the recently concluded Budget session of Parliament.

The committee report is based on the examination of the National Medical Commission (Recognition of Medical Qualifications) Regulations, 2023; Teachers Eligibility Qualifications in Medical Institutions Regulations, 2022; and the Medical Institutions (Qualifications of Faculty) Regulations, 2025, drafted by the NMC.

The report was tabled in the Parliament’s Budget session—*PTI*

Getting bills, Acts, rules, regulations duly ‘vetted’ by the law ministry is a “non-negotiable step” which ought not be “missed” as had been “candidly accepted” by the representatives of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare also during the deposition before the committee, the report noted.

Rules, regulations and orders issued under a particular law are called subordinate legislation.

They are also called delegated legislation, as Parliament allows the executive to frame rules for the efficient functioning and implementation of laws passed by it.

“These delegated legislations, once in the public domain, form the fulcrum for subsequent executive actions by the nodal agency and merit utmost caution and due diligence,” the panel cautioned.

The committee asked the Health Ministry “to be alert” and ensure that such errors do not creep up in future. —*PTI*

Gujarat local body polls: Amit Shah, CM Bhupendra Patel cast vote

AHMEDABAD, 26 APRIL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Deputy CM Harsh Sanghavi cast their votes today as elections are underway for multiple local bodies across the state.

The polls cover 15 municipal corporations, including Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot, along with 84 municipalities, 34 district panchayats and 260 taluka panchayats, making it one of Gujarat’s largest electoral exercises ahead of next year’s assembly polls.

Polling started at 7am and will continue until 6 pm, as per the Gujarat State Election Commission. Shah, accompanied by his wife Sonalben and son Jay Shah, cast his vote at the Naranpura sub-zonal office in Ahmedabad, receiving loud cheers from locals.

Chief Minister Patel voted at Shilaj Primary School, urging citizens to actively participate. “Everyone should participate in this festival of democracy,” he said, calling for all BJP candidates to be victorious.

In a post on X, Patel appealed to first-time and young voters to come out and vote, emphasising the goal of 100 per cent turnout.

Deputy CM Sanghavi and Union Minister CR Paatil also cast their votes in Surat. Nearly 9,200 seats are contested, with more than 4.18 crore voters eligible. Counting will take place on 28 April. —*PTI*

International Cricket Council chairman Jay Shah with father and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and their family members after casting votes in the municipal corporation elections, in Ahmedabad on Sunday —*PTI*

—PTI

Right-winger Gautam Khattar brought to Goa

PANAJI, 26 APRIL

Right-wing speaker Gautam Khattar was brought to Goa on Sunday on transit remand after his arrest in Himachal Pradesh. He was detained in Kullu district for allegedly making offensive remarks against St Francis Xavier, the patron saint of Goa. Khattar, founder of Sanatan Mahasangh, was arrested on Friday, ending days of search. A crime branch team arrived at Manohar International Airport with him. He will be produced before a local court, which will decide on his custody. The police have been investigating since an FIR was filed for 'hurting religious sentiments' after a viral video showed him making objectionable statements about St Francis Xavier during an event on 18 April. —*PTI*

Assam police push back 20 Bangladeshis

GUWAHATI, 26 APRIL

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that 20 illegal Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended and pushed back to Bangladesh. Sarma posted on X, "Rude people don't understand soft language... These 20 illegal Bangladeshis were PUSHED BACK last night." He did not specify where they were caught or their nationality. Assam shares 267.5 km of border with Bangladesh in districts like Sribhumi, Cachar, Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar. The state has three Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) along the border at Sutarkandi, Dawki, and Akhaura, with another on the India-Bhutan border. Assam Police and the Border Security Force continue efforts to prevent the entry of illegal immigrants and infiltrators from Bangladesh. Assam has been facing the problem of illegal immigration from Bangladesh since a long time —*PTI*

Man stabs family members over TV row in Thane

THANE, 26 APRIL

A domestic dispute over watching television resulted in a man stabbing his wife, daughter, and granddaughter in Thane. The incident occurred in Rabodi during the night of Friday and Saturday. Mohammad Tarique Khan, the accused, had frequent quarrels with his wife, especially over TV watching. After celebrating his granddaughter's birthday, he argued with his wife and attacked her with a kitchen knife. When his daughter and granddaughter intervened, he stabbed them too. They are receiving treatment. A case has been registered under section 118(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, but no arrest has been made. —*PTI*

Nurse tries to buy Rs 299 dress online, loses Rs 1L

MUMBAI, 26 APRIL

A Mumbai nurse was allegedly cheated of Rs 1 lakh after she tried to purchase a dress online for Rs 299, police said. The fraud was done using a Facebook advertisement, a WhatsApp number and a fake delivery agent, an official from Deonar police station said on Saturday. The nurse said she came across a Facebook advertisement offering dresses at just Rs 299 and tried to buy a piece. The person at the other end sought payment for the dress, but later "continued to extract money for shipping charges, GPS charges, tracking fees, verification codes and address confirmation," he said. The nurse told the police that she paid Rs 1 lakh between 16 and 20 April, and was assured that the money would be refunded once the order was refunded. When nothing happened, she filed a complaint, the official said. —*PTI*

Reject anticipatory bail, but don't force surrender, says SC

J'khand HC had rejected suspect's bail plea

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

A court can reject the anticipatory bail plea of a suspect but it has no powers to direct him to surrender before the trial court, the Supreme Court said.

Justices JB Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan made the observation while hearing a plea filed by a man accused of cheating and forgery.

"If the court wants to reject the anticipatory bail, it may do so, but the court has no powers to say that the petitioner should now surrender," the bench said.

The Jharkhand High Court had rejected the anticipatory bail plea of the accused and asked him to surrender and seek regular bail.

In this case, a complaint had been filed before a magistrate alleging offences under Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using forged document) and 120B read with 34 of the IPC, in connection with a land dispute.

The Jharkhand HC had dismissed the second anticipatory bail application of the suspect as no new circumstances were shown —*PTI*

The high court had dismissed the second anticipatory bail application of the accused as no new circumstances were shown.

It had relied on its earlier order rejecting his first anticipatory bail plea, in which the court directed the petitioner to surrender before the trial court and seek regular bail as per the decision in the Satender Kumar Antil Vs CBI case.

The Supreme Court said such a direction was beyond the court's powers and said that if a court chooses to reject an anticipatory bail plea, it may do so, but it cannot compel in any way the accused to surrender. — *PTI*

SEARING HEAT

Heatwave alert in Delhi as temp touches 44 degrees

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 26.2 degrees Celsius on Sunday, 2.4 notches below the seasonal average, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The maximum temperature is expected to touch 44 degrees Celsius on Sunday, the IMD said.

The relative humidity in the capital was 43 per cent at 8.30 am. The IMD has forecast a partly cloudy sky and has issued an orange alert for isolated heatwave by evening. The air quality was 'poor' at 9am, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 223, CPCB data said.

KERALA UV ALERT

Meanwhile, in Thiruvananthapuram the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) issued a public caution advisory on Sunday after high ultraviolet (UV) indices were recorded in the state in the last 24 hours.

As per data shared by KSDMA, UV index levels above 8, denoting an orange alert, were reported at Kottarakkara in Kollam district, Konni in Pathanamthitta district, Chengannur in Alappuzha district, Changanassery in Kottayam district and Munnar in Idukki district.

Similarly, a yellow alert, corresponding to a UV index of 6-7, was reported at Kalamassery in Ernakulam district, Thrithala in Palakkad district, Ponnani in Malappuram district and Mananthavady in Wayanad district.

The KSDMA said prolonged exposure to UV rays may cause sunburn, skin diseases and eye ailments."High UV index levels are generally recorded between 10 am and 3 pm, and people have been advised to avoid direct exposure to sunlight during this period," the authority said. KSDMA advised the public to use, umbrellas and sunglasses while going outdoors during the daytime and to wear cotton clothing that fully covers the body. — *PTI*

A heat-induced mirage shimmers along the road leading to the Rashtrapati Bhavan on a hot summer day in New Delhi —*ANI*

- High ultraviolet index levels are generally recorded between 10 am and 3 pm, and people have been advised to avoid direct exposure to sunlight during this period, the KSDMA said It advised the public to use, umbrellas and sunglasses while going outdoors during the daytime and to wear cotton clothing that fully covers the body

Naidu orders steps to tackle fuel shortage as 421 outlets close

AMARAVATI, 26 APRIL

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to take immediate steps to address the fuel shortage that has led to the closure of 421 gas stations in the state.

The CM reviewed the situation via teleconference with Chief Secretary Sai Prasad and senior officials before leaving Mumbai for Amaravati on Saturday, officials said. "The CM directed officials to immediately address the shortage and prevent inconvenience to the public," said a release on Sunday.

Officials informed Naidu that of the 4,510 fuel outlets in the state, around 421 have been shut. They said that although supply has increased by 10 per cent, demand surged sharply due to panic buying, resulting in heavy rush.

On a normal day, average sales stand at 6,330 kilolitres of petrol and 9,048 kilolitres of diesel, but purchases have risen significantly amid fears of shortage. On Saturday, sales reached 10,345 kilolitres of petrol and 14,156 kilolitres of diesel, they said.

Despite improved supply, consumers are facing difficulties due to panic buying.

Officials said that bulk purchases in drums, particularly in the aqua sector, are creating additional pressure.

Naidu directed officials to coordinate with collectors and the fisheries department to resolve the issue. — *PTI*

NGT alerts Centre about Himalayan glaciers

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

The National Green Tribunal has sought a response from the Centre and others regarding the danger hanging glaciers pose in the mountain slopes of central Himalayas.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was hearing a matter which it had taken up suo motu based on a newspaper report.

In an order dated 24 April, a NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Afroz Ahmad said, "The news item is about the danger posed by hanging glaciers on mountain slopes in the central Himalayas, where unstable hanging glaciers on steep mountain slopes could trigger devastating avalanches and downstream disasters."

The bench referred to the report and said researchers from the IISc, IIT Bhubaneswar and the DRDO Chandigarh, had assessed such glaciers in the Alaknanda basin of Uttarakhand, a key headstream region of the Ganga.

"Their findings revealed the scale of the growing danger. The newspaper states that such retreat has led to the detachment of tributary glaciers from trunk glaciers and has destabilised mountain glaciers that were previously stable."

The bench also noted that using satellite imagery, elevation models and avalanche simulations, the researchers had assessed the farthest potential distance ice avalanches could travel and their likely impact, and they concluded that in a worst-case scenario, flows could reach major settlements like including Mana, Badrinath and Hanuman Chatti in Uttrakhand.

It added the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Central Pollution Control Board, National Mission for Clean Ganga, Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, and the National Institute of Hydrology as respondents and issued notices. — *PTI*

ED CONDUCTS RAIDS IN KOLKATA IN FRAUD CASES LINKED TO SONA PAPPU

KOLKATA, 26 APRIL

ED sleuths searched multiple locations in Kolkata on Sunday in connection with alleged land grabbing and financial fraud cases linked to fugitive criminal 'Sona Pappu', a senior official said.

The ED raided the residences of two businessmen in Anandapur and Alipore, he said.

"The searches are part of an investigation into financial irregularities and suspected links with absconding accused Sona Pappu," the ED official said, requesting anonymity.

Sona Pappu, who is considered a key accused in cases of land grabbing and fraud, has been on the run for some time.

Officials believe he maintained close ties with several businessmen, prompting the agency to widen its probe.

"We have obtained crucial leads during questioning, which led us to these premises," the ED official said.

The ED is examining the role of the two businessmen in the alleged financial fraud, and whether they acted as conduits for illicit transactions, he added. — *PTI*

Three killed in fight over cake smearing at UP B-Day party

BULANDSHAHR, 26 APRIL

A birthday celebration in the Khurja Nagar area of Bulandshahr ended in a horrific crime on Saturday night, after an altercation over smearing cake on a person's face ended in triple homicide.

Police identified the victims as Amardeep Saini, Manish Saini, and Akash Saini. The prime accused, Jeetu Saini, whose birthday was being celebrated, remains at large along with his accomplices.

What was meant to be a joyful gathering at a gym and later near a residence soured when the victims reportedly applied cake on the face of the birthday boy, Jeetu Saini. The gesture was met with hostility, leading to a heated argument.

"Late tonight, the Khurja Nagar police station received information that three young men had been shot. The young men were admitted to hospital, where they were declared dead. The bodies have been taken for autopsy," SP (Rural) Antriksh Jain said.

Police have identified the victims as Amardeep Saini, Manish Saini, and Akash Saini —*SCREENGRAB*

- What was meant to be a joyful gathering soured when the victims reportedly applied cake on the face of the birthday boy, Jeetu Saini. The gesture was met with hostility, triggering an argument

"The families have named some individuals. The reason is that it was the birthday of one of the accused, during which the deceased put cake on his face. There was an altercation and it led to this incident today," Jain added.

Sanjay Saini, the brother of one of the victims, recounted the chilling events. He claimed that after the initial argument, the suspect retreated and returned with firearms.

Sanjay received a call from the suspect claiming that his brother was "abusing" them. Sanjay attempted to de-escalate, promising to resolve the matter in the morning.

"It was Jeetu Saini's birthday. I got a call saying, 'Your brother is abusing'. I told them that I'll talk to them in the morning, as I had to attend a wedding," he said. — *ANI*

MP official declares 3 living people dead; suspended

CHHATARPUR, 26 APRIL

A panchayat secretary in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district has been suspended after he allegedly issued death certificates in the names of three living persons, officials said on Sunday.

While locals alleged the secretary might have acted under pressure, officials suggested the error may have occurred due to his lack of computer skills.

The action against the secretary followed a complaint filed on 17 April by Ramabai Raikwar, Girja Vishwakarma and Kallu Ahirwar, who alleged they had been declared dead in official records and their death certificates had been issued. District panchayat CEO Namah Shivay Arjaria suspended Chandrapura gram panchayat secretary Amar Singh on Saturday, the officials said.

In their complaint, Raikwar and Vishwakarma stated that their widow pension had been stopped after they were declared dead. Ahirwar claimed he was unable to avail benefits under Dalit welfare schemes as he had been declared dead. — *PTI*

SUMMER HORROR

Seven die of snakebites in Keralam

KANNUR/IDUKKI, 26 APRIL

Two women died due to snakebite in Kannur and Idukki on Sunday. With this, the number of snakebite fatalities reported in Keralam has risen to seven.

In the first case, the deceased was identified as Nafeesa, 65, a native of Muthkuda near Thaliparamba.

Police said Nafeesa was found unconscious at her house and was rushed to hospital. It was later confirmed that she had been bitten by a snake.

Police said she was administered anti-venom and remained on ventilator, but died at the hospital early on Sunday.

Doctors suspect that Nafeesa was bitten by a common krait, which is present in the area in significant numbers.

Later in the afternoon, a 75-year-old woman died after being bitten by a snake near her house at Kanjar in Idukki district, police said. The deceased was identified as Vishalakshi.

Police said she was working outside her house when she was bitten by a snake. Although she was rushed to hospital, she died.

On Sunday, Sharmila, a tourist from Coimbatore who was staying at a resort in Cherai near Kochi, was bitten by a snake in the resort's garden. She was admitted to a nearby hospital.

A youth was admitted to a private hospital after being bitten by a snake at Ramankulangara in Kollam district on Sunday.

Similarly, a person was hospitalised after being bitten by a snake at his house in Murani, near Mallappally, in Pathanamthitta district, on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister's Office said on Sunday that the government will bear the expenses of 10-year-old Anosh, who is undergoing treatment after being bitten by a snake at his house in Kodaly in Thrissur district last week.

Anosh's brother Aljo, 8, had died after snakebite a few days back — *PTI*

CHARMINAR EXPRESS STOPPED AFTER SMOKE FROM COACH, NO INJURIES

HYDERABAD, 26 APRIL

Smoke and sparks emanated from a wheel of a coach on the Charminar Express, causing the train to be halted at Aler Railway Station in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Telangana, on 25 April. SCR officials confirmed no damage or casualties resulted from the incident.

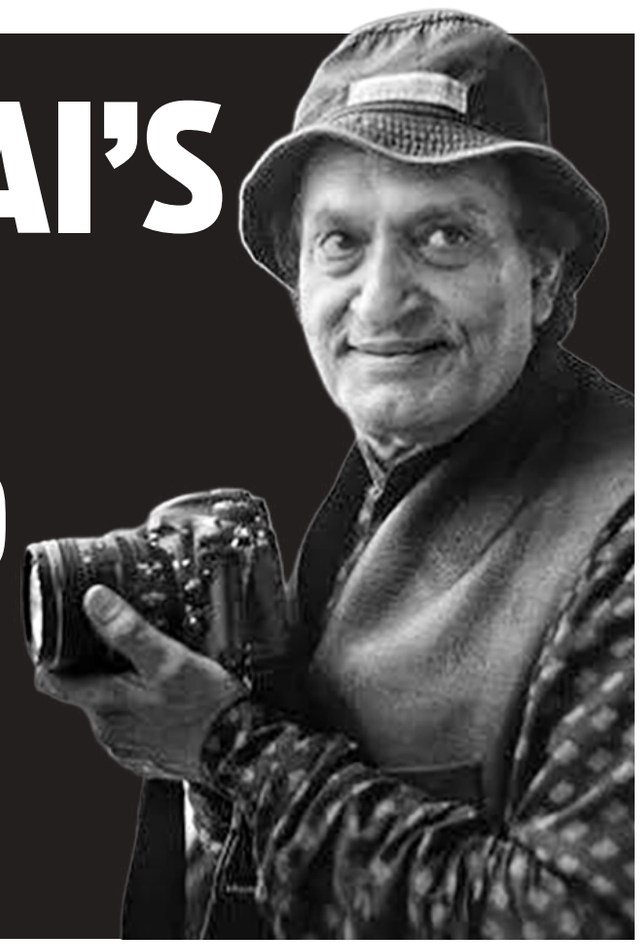
The South Central Railway (SCR) stated on 'X' that the train, No.12760 Hyderabad to Tambaram, was stopped at 19:47 hrs due to brake binding in coach S5.

The smoke and sparks were immediately extinguished by railway staff.

Brake binding occurs when brake pads stick to wheels, causing wheels to drag, which can produce smoke, sparks, and a burning smell as the steel wheels stop rotating and brushes on the rails.

The train resumed its journey at 20.10hours, reaching Tambaram without any further incident or problems, the South Central Railway added. —*PTI*

RAGHU RAI'S LENS & A THOUSAND WORLDS



18 DEC, 1942 - 26 APRIL, 2026

Photographer Raghu Rai's camera caught the ordinary, the every person, with equal, if not more, sensibility and sensitivity. The mundane was made extraordinary, often in black and white, as if trying to soften the edges of life's ruggedness.

In a PTI interview in 2023, Rai said the best thing about capturing moments on camera is coming face-to-face with questions about life and its ever-changing nature. "It's been more than 55 years but the most powerful part about photography is — life and nature are ever changing and ever challenging and that shakes you up," the veteran photographer had told PTI.

He recorded India's social, political and spiritual shades in his portraits of leading figures, including Indira Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Satyajit Ray, Hariprasad Chaurasia and Bismillah Khan, which offered hitherto unknown perspectives into their lives.

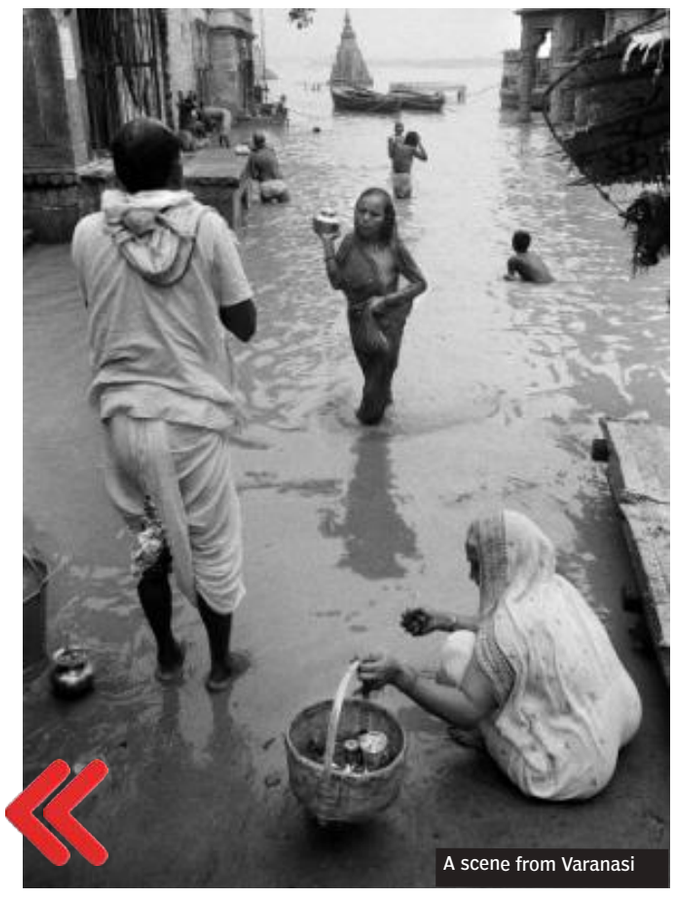
A picture, among his most telling perhaps, shows a pensive group of Congress ministers, all male, standing huddled around Indira Gandhi as she sits at her desk. The photo is simply captioned: "Indira Gandhi with Congress men, Delhi, 1967". The contrast, while stark, between the two images, conjures up the shadow of a photojournalist standing too close for comfort to his subjects.

Photographer Aditya Arya, founder of Museo Camera, said Rai introduced Indian journalism to such photography that you were almost one with the subject.

"Photojournalism has changed a lot. With his wide angle, he would be in the middle of the action. Today, the photojournalism is 300-400 feet away with the huge telephoto, because you are not allowed anywhere close to the personalities. You can see in his photos how things change when you are in the middle of the action," Arya told PTI.

Rai believed that the purpose of photography is "to capture the time we live in". "When you capture the essence of any situation at the right time, it is going to be the visual history of tomorrow. History is written and rewritten but visual history can't be re-written," he had told PTI.

Varanasi fascinated him. From the quiet rituals of cremations to the spiritual vibrations of the Ganga aarti, from the busy city streets with hurried movements to intense discussions at tea stalls, Rai's lens caught the holy city in its element, filled with raw and unmatched energy.



A scene from Varanasi

He saw a Banaras that was "less aware of its own image, a place that hadn't yet learned to pose for the lens", said photographer Samar Jodha, who felt like "a son and a friend" of Rai.

Jodha remembered Rai for the stories of the ordinary person, rather than the celebrities, that he portrayed through his camera.

"He was really about working with the ordinary people, working in the ordinary situation. And that's a real test of picture making, because working as a professional photographer, many times the theme which carries that image is more than just your great picture making," Jodha told PTI.

"He had what in Hindi, in Urdu, in Punjabi we call 'junoon'. That particular madness which keeps you going no matter what stands in your way. Not people pleasing. Not negotiating with the world. Just that stubborn, burning need to be true," he said.

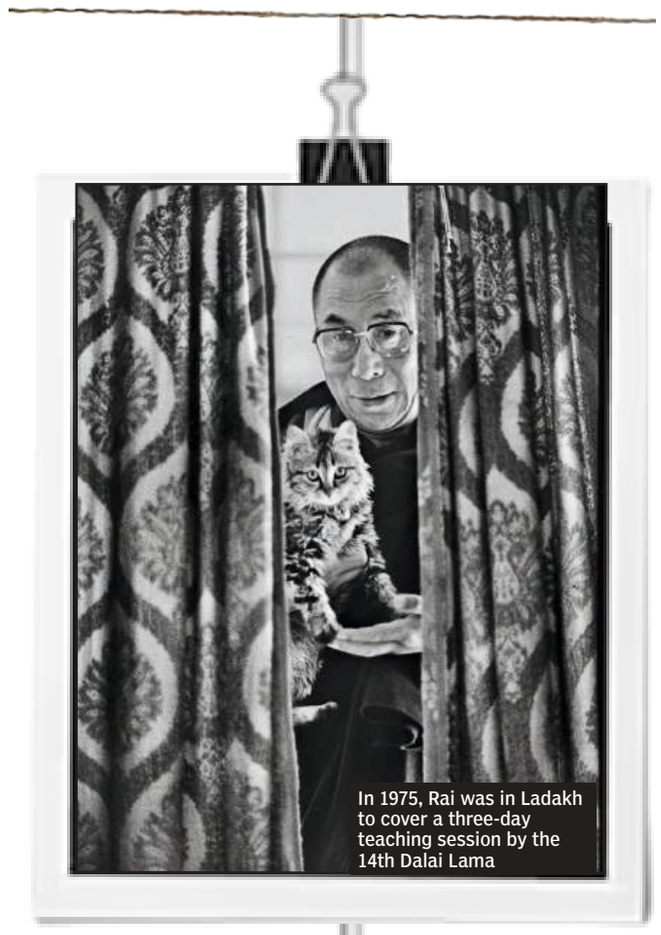
During his long and illustrious career, Rai worked with leading Indian magazines Sunday and India Today. Over the years, his photo essays appeared in renowned international publications, including Time, Life, The New York Times, The Independent, and The New Yorker.

He served three times on the jury of the World Press Photo and twice on the jury of UNESCO's International Photo Contest, according to Magnum Photos, where he was nominated to join by Cartier-Bresson in 1977.

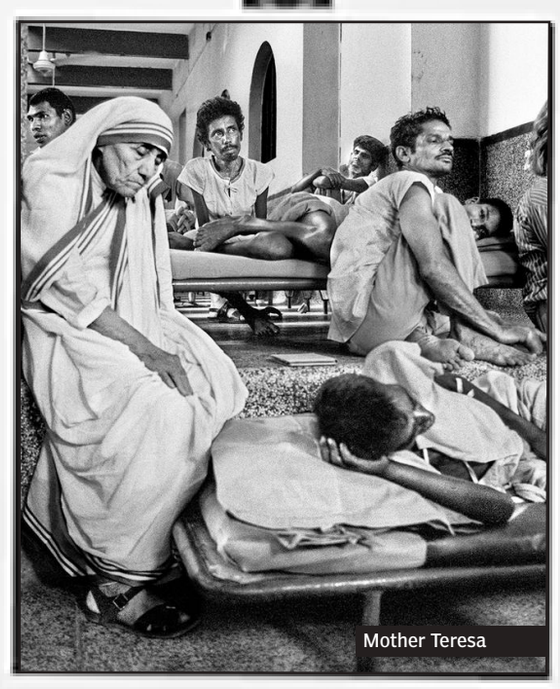
Rai received the Padma Shri in 1972 for his coverage of the Bangladesh war and its aftermath, apart from several national and international awards.He received the Photographer of the Year award in the United States for his photo essay "Human Management of Wildlife in India", published in National Geographic. The French government conferred him with the Officier des Arts et des Lettres in 2009.

Rai also left behind a large number of books, including 'Raghu Rai's India: Reflections in Colour and Reflections in Black and White' and 'Exposure: Portrait Of A Corporate Crime'.

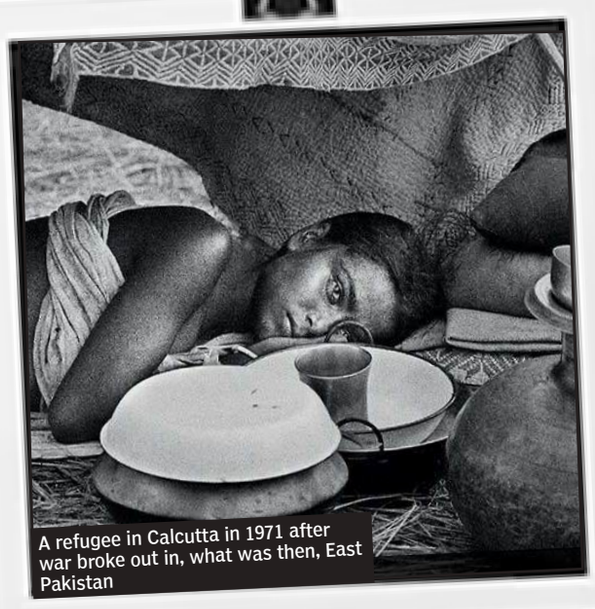
Rai was working on his 57th book, according to the website of the Raghu Rai Foundation, which was established in 2010 and has archived more than 50,000 of his images. *—PTI*



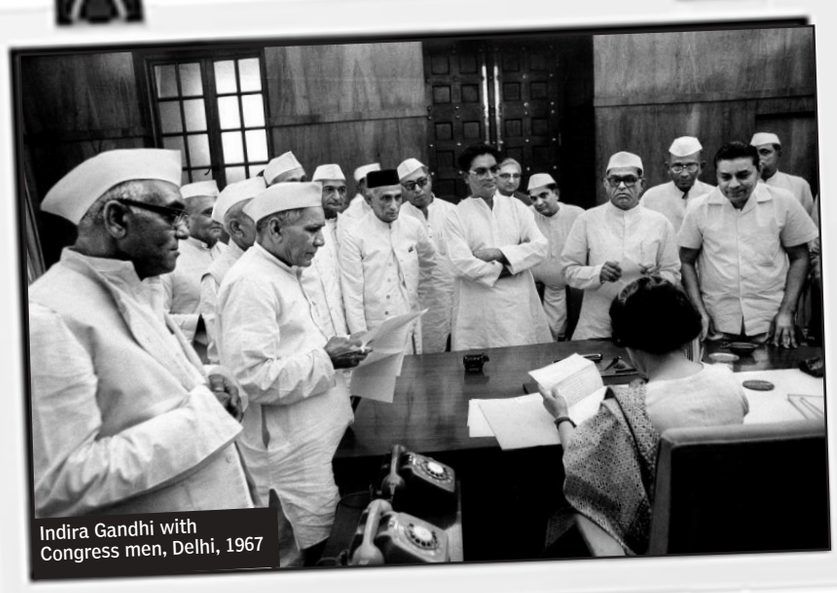
In 1975, Rai was in Ladakh to cover a three-day teaching session by the 14th Dalai Lama



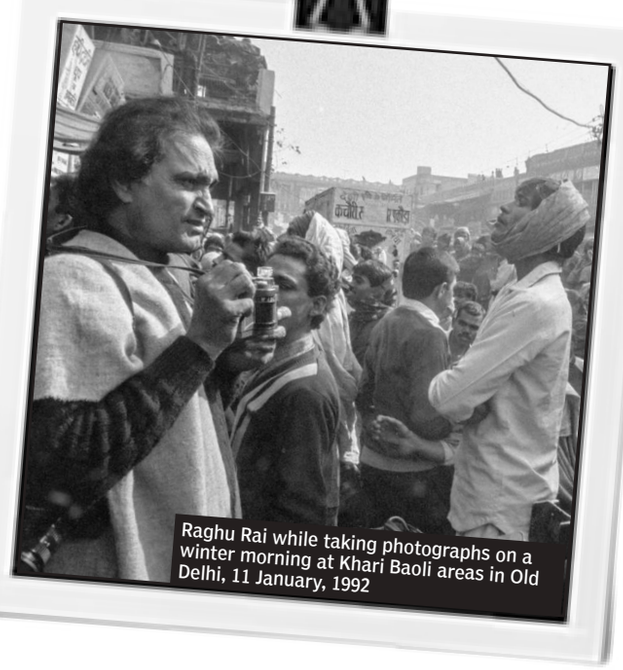
Mother Teresa



A refugee in Calcutta in 1971 after war broke out in, what was then, East Pakistan



Indira Gandhi with Congress men, Delhi, 1967



Raghu Rai while taking photographs on a winter morning at Khari Baoli areas in Old Delhi, 11 January, 1992

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Why Bengal's Bhabanipur is mother of all electoral contests

In West Bengal's political imagination, Bhabanipur is no longer just another south Kolkata assembly seat. It is Mamata Banerjee's political refuge and home turf, the BJP's chosen psychological battlefield, where the stage is set for what many in Bengal are calling the "mother of all electoral contests".

With Banerjee, the Chief Minister and three-term MLA from the constituency, locked in a direct contest with Leader of Opposition and BJP heavyweight Suvendu Adhikari, the 29 April election has turned Bhabanipur into the state's most closely watched prestige fight.

Bhabanipur is effectively bracing for a symbolic rematch of Nandigram, where Adhikari defeated Banerjee, his once political mentor, in 2021 after quitting the TMC and joining the BJP.

Five years later, the duel has shifted to Banerjee's own bastion. For the TMC, retaining Bhabanipur is about protecting the chief minister's political authority in her own backyard. For the BJP, breaching it would mean puncturing the aura of invincibility around Bengal's most powerful leader.

Spread across eight Kolkata Municipal Corporation wards, Bhabanipur is often called 'mini India' – a constituency where Bengalis coexist with Gujarati traders, Punjabi and Sikh households, Marwari and Jain families, alongside a sizeable Muslim electorate. Migrants from Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand add another layer to the social mix.

Around 42 per cent of voters are Bengali Hindus, 34 per cent non-Bengali Hindus and nearly 24 per cent Muslims, making it socially diverse and politically sensitive.

For months, the BJP has mapped Bhabanipur booth by booth. Party leaders claim Kayasthas make up 26.2 per cent of the electorate, Muslims 24.5 per cent, eastern Indian migrant communities 14.9 per cent, Marwaris 10.4 per cent and Brahmins 7.6 per cent.

Political heavyweights Mamata Banerjee and Suvendu Adhikari are contesting from Bhabanipur *—PTI*

The exercise, party insiders said, helped identify where Bengali Hindus dominate, where Hindi-speaking trader communities are concentrated, and which booths are likely to be influenced by Muslim voters, turning the constituency into a finely calibrated caste-community contest rather than a conventional urban seat.

Its political history mirrors Bengal's own transformation. Once a Congress citadel represented by heavyweights like Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Bhabanipur disappeared after delimitation in 1972 and was revived only in 2011, the year Banerjee ended the Left Front's 34-year rule.

Her close aide Subrata Bakshi first won the seat, vacated it, and Banerjee entered the assembly through the bypoll that effectively became her coronation as an MLA after being sworn in as chief minister. She retained the seat in 2016.

In 2021, she shifted to Nandigram but, after losing to Suvendu Adhikari by 1,956 votes, returned to the assembly through the Bhabanipur bypoll, defeating BJP's Priyanka Tibrewal by more than 58,000 votes.

That history explains why within the TMC, Bhabanipur is viewed as Banerjee's political insurance. Her Kalighat residence is in the constituency, and its lanes and community clubs were central to her rise from Kolkata South MP to Bengal's most dominant politician. "This is not just another seat. People here have repeatedly stood by Mamata Banerjee's politics of development and inclusiveness," Kolkata Mayor and senior TMC leader Firhad Hakim said.

The TMC has also revived the emotional pitch of "ghorer meye" – the daughter of the house. At strategy meetings chaired by Bakshi, councillors were asked to push slogans around it.

The campaign is designed less around aggression and more around familiarity - Banerjee not as the chief minister, but as the neighbourhood's own Didi. Welfare schemes such as Lakshmir Bhandar, Kanyashree and social security for women remain central to that appeal.

The BJP, however, believes the ground has shifted.

Its strategy rests on booth-level caste arithmetic, consolidation of Hindu votes, and turning Bhabanipur into a psychological contest through Adhikari's candidature.

"The battle… has to be fought booth by booth, community by community. The state now wants Ram Rajya," BJP leader Debjit Sarkar said.

The BJP also draws confidence from electoral trends. It had shown signs of growth in Bhabanipur as early as the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, and even won Banerjee's own Kolkata Municipal Corporation Ward 73 in 2014.

The trend sharpened in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, when the TMC's lead in the Bhabanipur assembly segment fell to just 8,297 votes, compared to Banerjee's 58,832-vote margin in the 2021 bypoll. Significantly, the BJP finished ahead in five of the constituency's eight wards, while the TMC led in only three.

SIR has added another strategic layer as its electorate shrunk to 1,55,291, with over 51,000 names deleted. Of these deletions, 23.3 per cent are Muslims and 76.7 per cent non-Muslims.

For the BJP, this strengthens the argument that the seat is now more competitive if Hindu consolidation holds, while for the TMC, it reinforces fears of disruption among the traditional support base. *—PTI*

Syria begins 1st public trial of Assad-era officials

DAMASCUS, 26 APRIL

The first public trial in Syria of officials linked to the rule of former president Bashar Assad opened in Damascus Sunday. Atef Najib, a former Syrian army brigadier general who was head of the political security branch in southern Syria's Daraa province, appeared in the courtroom to face charges related to "crimes against the Syrian people.". Najib was in that position in 2011 when teenagers who scrawled anti-government graffiti on a school wall in Daraa were arrested and tortured. The case became a catalyst for mass protests against the Assad's repressive policies, which resulted in a brutal government crackdown that spiralled into the 14-year civil war. Bashar and his brother Maher Assad are charged in absentia. Najib is the only defendant in custody. *—PTI*

13 killed, 38 injured in attack on Colombian bus

BOGOTA, 26 APRIL

An explosive device killed 13 people and injured at least 38 on a bus in southwestern Colombia on Saturday, in an attack linked to ongoing regional violence. Octavio Guzman, Cauca's governor, reported the device detonated on the Panamerican Highway in Cajibio. Five children were among the injured, according to Cauca Health Secretary Carolina Camargo. Colombian Armed Forces Commander Gen. Hugo Lopez described it as a "terrorist act," blaming dissidents of the FARC, notably "Ivan Mordisco" and Jaime Martínez factions, who reject the 2016 peace agreement. President Gustavo Petro condemned the violence, calling those responsible terrorists, fascists, and drug traffickers. The region is facing a surge in attacks. *—PTI*

2 Americans among 19 killed in Philippines

MANILA, 26 APRIL

Philippine troops killed 19 suspected communist guerrillas in clashes, including two Americans, in Negros Occidental's Toboso on 19 April, according to the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict. The Americans, identified as Lyle Prijoles and Kai Dana-Rene Sorem, were killed during fierce fighting that also claimed 17 other suspected New People's Army fighters. The task force warned Americans of Filipino descent in the US to be cautious of "terror-grooming" by activist groups supporting insurgents. Human rights groups called for an independent investigation, citing civilian casualties including a student leader, farmers' advocates and a community journalist, arguing this is part of ongoing legal violations. *—PTI*

Security alert in Ireland after car bomb blast

LONDON, 26 APRIL

Northern Ireland police declared a security alert in Dunmurry, near Belfast, after reports of a car bomb explosion outside a police station. Homes were evacuated, and the public advised to avoid the area. Sorcha Eastwood, MP for Lagan Valley, condemned the attack, saying, "It is distressing and disturbing to wake up to the news that a car bomb exploded outside Dunmurry police station last night." She highlighted the risk to residents businesses in the vicinity. Last month, a similar device was found in Lurgan, where masked assailants forced a delivery driver to transport a bomb to a police station, which was then safely detonated. Dissident Republican groups remain active despite the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. *—PTI*

White House shooter is a tutor & techie

The suspect Cole Tomas Allen was developing shooting video game, supported Kamala

Law enforcement personnel arrest a suspect following the shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in Washington *—PTI*

WASHINGTON, 26 APRIL

Social media posts that appear to match the California man arrested on Saturday in the shooting at the White House correspondents' dinner show he is a highly educated tutor and amateur video game developer.

A May 2025 profile photo of Cole Tomas Allen of Torrance appears to match the appearance of the man in a photo of the alleged attacker being taken into custody.

The photo, posted on LinkedIn, shows him in a cap and gown after graduating with a master's degree in computer science from California State University-Dominguez Hills.

Allen, who is 31 year old, earned a bachelor's degree in 2017 in mechanical engineering from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

He listed his involvement there in a Christian student fellowship and a campus group that battled with Nerf guns.

A local ABC station in Los Angeles included an interview with Allen during his senior year of college. He had developed a prototype for a new type of emergency brake for wheelchairs.

Allen contributed USD 25 to a Democratic Party political action committee in support of Kamala Harris for president in 2024, according to federal campaign finance records.

Allen's online resume says he worked for the last six years at C2 Education, a company that offers admissions counselling and test preparation services to aspiring college students.

A 2024 post on the company's Facebook page listed Allen as the company's teacher of the month. The company did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Saturday night.

Allen also posted that he had developed a video game for the Steam platform based on molecular chemistry.

A post under Allen's name said he was working to develop a new "top-down shooter" combat game set in outer space.

US President Donald Trump said Allen had multiple firearms on him when he was arrested. *—PTI*

I've studied assassinations. And I must tell you the most impactful people – you take a look at (former president) Abraham Lincoln –are the ones they go after. hate to say I'm honored by that, but I've done a lot

-Donald Trump, US President

This is why we need a ballroom: Trump

Trump used the incident to make the case for renovating the White House ballroom. He argued that law enforcement has been wanting for a ballroom for "150 years" and said "tonight's shooting is why we have all the attributes of what we're planning at the White House". Trump's renovation of the White House ballroom could cost up to $400 million.

WORLD LEADERS CONDEMN ATTACK

We are relieved the President and First Lady are safe. We send our wishes for a full and speedy recovery to the wounded police officer and salute the US Secret Service for their swift action.

-Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli PM

We extend our best wishes to them and to all attendees of the Correspondent's dinner. Violence is never an option for those who uphold the values of peace

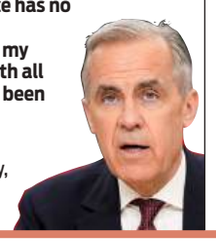
-Delcy Rodriguez, acting Venezuelan President

The armed attack is unacceptable. Violence has no place in a democracy. I extend my full support to Donald Trump.

Emmanuel Macron, French President

I am relieved that the President, the First Lady, and all guests are safe... Political violence has no place in any democracy, and my thoughts are with all those who have been shaken by this disturbing even

-Mark Carney, Canadian Prime Minister



No political hatred can find space in our democracies. We will not allow fanaticism to poison the places of free debate and information. The defence of the culture of confrontation must remain the insurmountable bulwark against every intolerant drift, to safeguard the values that found our nations

-Giorgia Meloni, Italian Prime Minister

Violence has no place in US: Lawmakers

Secret service agents in action during the White House Correspondents Dinner shooting in Washington; Trump takes cover*—PTI*

WASHINGTON, 26 APRIL

Political violence has no place in the US, lawmakers cutting across party lines asserted after the shooting incident after the White House.

Veteran Democrat leader Nancy Pelosi, a prominent Trump detractor, said it was a great relief that the President, First Lady and everyone in attendance at the White House Correspondents' Dinner are safe. "The brave men and women of the US Secret Service and local law enforcement are to be commended for their swift action to secure the scene and protect those present. As someone whose family has suffered political violence, my prayers are with the injured officer and all those affected by the trauma of these horrible incidents," Pelosi said.

Mayor of New York Zohran Mamdani said on X: "Political violence is absolutely unacceptable".

House Speaker Mike Johnson said he and his wife Kelly were at the event and were thankful that no innocent people were harmed and everyone is now safe.

Trump himself gave a call for national unity.

"I ask that all Americans recommit with their hearts in resolving our differences peacefully. We have to, we have to resolve our differences – Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Conservatives, Liberals, and Progressives," Trump said at the White House, flanked by First Lady Melania, Vice President JD Vance, FBI Director Kash Patel and other officials.*—PTI*

EERIE STORY

Hilton Hotel is where Reagan was shot at

WASHINGTON, 26 APRIL

At the Washington Hilton, where the White House Correspondents' Association dinner was held, security was built around both the venue's layout and its history, including the attempted assassination of former president Ronald Reagan in 1981 and now US President Donald Trump.

Officials said that Trump's assassination suspect likely gained entry by staying at the hotel, allowing him to bypass the outermost security. The roughly 2,300 guests entering the ballroom underwent multiple layers of screening, including ticket checks and magnetometers operated by the Secret Service and TSA.

Inside, security tightened further. Trump was protected by Secret Serves with a buffer zone—concealed armoured plating at the head table—and heavily armed agents stationed around the stage. Once the President was seated, entry to the secured area was locked down. Despite the breach, authorities maintained that the "multi-layered" system functioned as intended.

The hotel itself has long been central to presidential security planning. After Reagan was shot there in 1981, extensive upgrades were made. The venue has since been repeatedly used by the Secret Service for training and high-security event planning. *—PTI*

Won't negotiate under pressure: Iran

TEHRAN, 26 APRIL

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday said that Iran will not enter into negotiations under pressure, threats, and siege, according to state media.

"The contradiction has increased the level of mistrust [in Washington] among the Iranian people and officials of the Islamic Republic," Pezeshkian told Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during a nearly hour-long phone conversation.

"The continuation of hostile US measures, including a naval blockade, is inconsistent with its stated claims of pursuing a political resolution," Pezeshkian said.

Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's determination to defend its national security, and warned of all possible consequences of any renewed confrontation.

The comments come after the US decided not to send negotiators to Pakistan when Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was visiting Islamabad.

Araghchi is set to again meet Pakistani officials to convey "Iran's positions and views on the framework of any understanding to completely end the war", state media reported. This comes after he met Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq in Muscat. Araghchi also spoke to Egyptian and Turkey officials by the phone.

Meanwhile, the US Navy intercepted the merchant vessel M/V Sevan in the Arabian Sea on Saturday as it continues to enforce a blockade of Iranian ports and vessels. CENTCOM said the vessel was a part of the Iranian "shadow fleet" which transports various energy products. *—Agencies*

7 KILLED AS ISRAEL BOMBS LEBANON AMID CEASEFIRE

BEIRUT, 26 APRIL

Israeli forces on Saturday launched fresh attacks on Khiam and Yohmor al-Shaqif in Lebanon, signalling renewed escalation along the volatile southern border despite an ongoing ceasefire extension between Israel and Lebanon. At least seven people were killed and 24 others, including three children, injured, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said it carried out strikes on Hezbollah rocket launchers in the southern Lebanese towns of Yater and Kafra, stating that they posed a threat to its troops and Israeli civilians.

Israeli soldiers used bulldozers to destroy solar panels in Debel, south Lebanon on Sunday. Water supplies were also hit *—SCREENGRAB*

The strikes come after US President Donald Trump announced a three-week ceasefire extension .

Lebanese state media also reported that Israeli warplanes were circling over Beirut. *—Agencies*

BOOST FOR SPACE CAPABILITIES

China launches Pakistani satellite

BEIJING, 26 APRIL

- This is the fourth Pakistani satellite launched by China since last year

China has launched a Pakistani satellite from its Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in north China's Shanxi Province on Saturday night. China has been launching satellites for Pakistan in the last few years, broadening its all-weather alliance with Pakistan into the space arena.

The satellite, named PRSC-EO3, was launched at 8.15pm (Beijing Time) by a Long March-6 carrier rocket. It has successfully entered its planned orbit, China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported. This is the fourth Pakistani satellite launched by China since last year.

Separately, the China Manned Space Agency announced that two Pakistani nationals, who arrived in Beijing on Friday, were selected by China to undergo astronaut training as official participants in the nation's space mission training programme.

These astronauts successfully reached the Astronaut Centre of China in Beijing on that same Friday, where they are now prepared to join training. Upon completing all required training, one of the two will participate in a space mission as a payload specialist, becoming the first foreign astronaut to board China's Tiangong space station, currently in orbit. *—PTI*

The satellite, PRSC-EO3, was launched at 8.15pm by a Long March-6 carrier rocket and has entered orbit *—x*

16 killed in Russia, Ukraine on Chernobyl anniversary

KYIV, 26 APRIL

At least 16 people have been killed across Ukraine, Russian-occupied territory, and Russia over the weekend, as the 40th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster prompted warnings about nuclear dangers amid ongoing conflict. Local authorities report nine deaths from Russian drone and missile strikes in Dnipro; one person was killed in a Ukrainian attack on Sevastopol in Crimea.

Leonid Pasechnik, the Russia-installed governor in Luhansk, said three died in an overnight Ukrainian drone strike, with two earlier casualties. Ukraine did not comment on these incidents, which could not be independently verified. A woman was killed in Ukraine's drone attack on Russia's Belgorod region.

—UKRAINE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Ukrainian forces targeted a Russian oil refinery in Yaroslavl, sparking fires.

Rafael Grossi of the IAEA stressed urgent repairs to Chernobyl's damaged shelter, warning inaction could increase danger. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development estimates repairs cost at least € 500 million. *—PTI*

India, New Zealand to sign free trade pact on 27 April

Pact to bring in USD 20B investment, firms get duty-free access to mkts

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

India and New Zealand are set to sign their free trade agreement (FTA) on Monday, aimed at doubling bilateral trade between the two countries.

The pact will give India companies duty-free access to the island nation's markets, and bring in USD 20 billion of investment in manufacturing, infrastructure, services, innovation and job creation over the next 15 years.

The pact will be signed in the presence of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Todd McClay, New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment, here at Bharat Mandapam.

The FTA with New Zealand will provide huge opportunities for domestic firms, including leather exporters from Agra, Goyal said.

The deal will also give India more temporary employment visas, with a quota of 5,000 visas annually and a stay of up to three years, apart from easier access for pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

The free trade pact will provide huge opportunities for domestic firms, including leather exporters –FREEPIK

While the agreement will eliminate or reduce tariffs on 95 per cent of New Zealand's exports of items to India, New Delhi made no concessions on allowing imports of dairy, onions, sugar, spices, edible oils and rubber to protect farmers and domestic industry.

New Zealand will also get quota-based tariff cuts for kiwifruit and apple exports and duty-free access to goods such as sheep meat, wool, coal and over 95 per cent of forestry and wood articles.

The deal is aimed at doubling bilateral trade to USD 5 billion in five years.

New Zealand will also set up a dedicated Agri-Technology Action Plan on kiwifruit, apples and honey with a view to help Indian farmers enhance productivity and quality.

Apart from tariff liberalisation, the pact includes provisions to address non-tariff barriers.

Bilateral merchandise trade between India and New Zealand stood at USD 1.3 billion in 2024-25, while total trade in goods and services reached about USD 2.4 billion in 2024, with services trade alone reaching USD 1.24 billion. —*PTI*

FALL IN EQUITIES

Mcap of top valued firms erodes by Rs 2L cr; TCS loses

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

-PTI

The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most-valued firms eroded by Rs 2 lakh crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest laggards, in-tandem with a bearish trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 1,829.33 points, or 2.33 per cent, and the NSE Nifty dropped 455.6 points, or 1.87 per cent.

"Markets ended lower after two consecutive weeks of gains, weighed down by heightened geopolitical tensions and weak earnings commentary from IT majors," Ajit Mishra -- SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Global developments continued to dominate market direction, with ongoing uncertainty around the West Asia crisis and concerns over supply disruptions keeping crude oil prices elevated.

The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most valued firms dropped by Rs 2,05,343.06 crore.

The market valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) tumbled Rs 66,699.44 crore to Rs 8,67,364.12 crore, while Reliance Industries lost Rs 50,670.34 crore from its valuation of Rs 17,96,647.50 crore.

The valuation of HDFC Bank dived Rs 23,090.05 crore and that of Life Insurance Corporation of India dropped by Rs 19,670.75 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bharti Airtel declined Rs 19,406.59 crore to Rs 11,05,718.62 crore.

ICICI Bank's mcap edged lower by Rs 14,663.27 crore to Rs 9,50,345.40 crore and that of Larsen & Toubro diminished by Rs 11,142.62 crore to Rs 5,52,171.88 crore. Hindustan Unilever's valuation jumped Rs 20,652.91 crore. —*PTI*

Govt asks PSBs to revise wages within 12 months

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

The government has asked public sector banks to initiate the process of negotiations for the 13th Bi-partite settlement in a time-bound manner and finalise it in the next 12 months.

The wage revision for employees and officers of public sector banks would be due from 1 November, 2027.

Public sector banks (PSBs) and financial institutions, including insurance companies revise wages of their employees every five years. As part of the settlement, the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) is expected to engage in dialogues with the employees' unions/associations and arrive at a mutually agreeable wage settlement.

The Department of Financial Services advised PSBs to initiate the necessary measures to commence negotiations for the impending wage revision.

Public sector banks have generated record profits in FY25 and is expected to continue the momentum in FY26. Combined PSB profits crossed Rs 1 lakh crore to reach Rs 1.05 lakh crore in FY23, before rising to Rs 1.41 lakh crore in FY24, and to Rs 1.78 lakh crore in FY25. The improvement has been driven by stronger asset quality, sustained credit growth, comfortable capital buffers and rising return on assets. PSBs' gross non-performing assets stood at a record low of 2.30 per cent at the end of September 2025, while net NPAs were around 3 per cent. —*PTI*

Wage revision of public sector banks are due from 1 November, 2027 –PTI

'IT'S' CONFIDENTIAL'

India denies RTI seeking data on Russian oil import

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Data on oil imports from Russia to India cannot be provided as it is exempted under the Right To Information (RTI) Act due to its "commercial and confidential" nature, the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) under the Oil Ministry said, with the Central Information Commission backing it.

The case relates to an RTI plea seeking details of crude oil imported from Russia to India between June 2022 and June 2025, including a company-wise breakup for firms such as IOCL, BPCL, HPCL, ONGC Videsh, Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy.

The central public information officer (CPIO) had denied the information. The First Appellate Authority upheld this reply.

During the hearing recently, the appellant argued that the information was not provided and said he wanted to understand how India is functioning in the sector.

The Commission observed that disclosure of the requested data "would prejudicially affect the strategic and economic interest of the state and also affect the relations with foreign states," adding that the information is linked to geopolitical relations.

The Commission also issued a show-cause notice to the official concerned of the PPAC, for being absent from the hearing.

It also recommended that the public authority improve suo motu disclosures. —*PTI*

RTI plea sought details of Russian crude imports between 2022-2025–FREEPIK

Reliance navigates volatile oil mkts with agile sourcing

NEW DELHI, 16 APRIL

Reliance Industries Ltd relied on diversified crude sourcing and operational agility to navigate a volatile energy market during the last quarter of FY26.

After the Iran war disrupted oil and gas flows from Gulf countries, Reliance, which operates the world's largest oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat -- tapped non-Persian Gulf suppliers to replace barrels lost due to the conflict, the company said.

Global crude markets remained largely oversupplied through most of FY26, even as sanctions by the US and EU on Russian oil tightened before easing in March. Structurally tight refining capacity and strong demand growth of about 0.8 million barrels per day in calendar 2025 drove a sharp rebound in fuel cracks.

While supply chain was disrupted and energy markets were dislocated, Reliance replaced Persian Gulf loading contracts and worked with suppliers in the region to reroute stranded crude. It also diversified sourcing across geographies and ensured feedstock security for both refinery-linked and ethane-based operations. Reliance prioritised domestic supplies, diverting products to the local market to maintain availability amid global disruptions, while optimising logistics and freight costs —*PTI*

Scindia inaugurates Adani's garment hub in MP

BADARWAS, 26 APRIL

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia inaugurated an Adani Vikas Kendra in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district, spanning 48,000 square feet, to empower women through garment making and skill development.

The centre, with 600 sewing machines, will operate as a training and production hub. Scindia said, "What we are witnessing in Badarwas is the power of aspiration taking shape.

I congratulate Gautam Adani and the Adani Foundation for creating a platform where skills can reach global markets." The Swabhimaan programme aims to connect one million women across India with sustainable livelihoods. As the centre expands, approximately 1,500 women are expected to earn a steady income, support families.

Meanwhile, Adani Green Energy Ltd plans to invest Rs 15,000 crore in FY27 to add over 10GWh of battery storage capacity, beyond the anticipated 3GWh soon operational. The batteries, developed alongside the Khavda renewable park in Gujarat, aim to provide reliable power during peak demand.

AGEL's renewable portfolio is largest at 19.3GW, targeting 50GW by FY30, with 75 per cent backed by 25-year PPAs. This move signifies a shift towards ensuring grid stability and system reliability—*PTI*

'Hydrogen leak caused R'than refinery fire'

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) said a leak was the likely cause of the fire at its joint venture refinery in Rajasthan's Balotra district, and restoration work is expected to be completed within three to four weeks.

A major fire broke out near the main unit of the newly built Rs 79,450-crore refinery of HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Ltd on 20 April, a day before the scheduled inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fire in the crude distillation unit was likely caused by a hydrocarbon leak from a valve or flange in a heat exchanger circuit.

HPCL said investigations confirmed the fire was localised to the heat exchanger stack, impacting six exchangers and associated equipment.

Other secondary units are at an advanced stage of commissioning and are progressing as planned.

Trial production of key fuels, including LPG, petrol, diesel and naphtha is expected to begin within May, followed by stabilisation and full commissioning of the units.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has instituted a separate inquiry into the incident by a team of four officials.

MOST POWERFUL AI TOOL

Banks stratigise digital defence against Mythos

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

As the global financial sector grapples with the implications of Anthropic's AI model 'Mythos', which they claim to be the most powerful yet, the conversation has shifted from theoretical innovation to urgent national security.

With a recently high level meeting chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, along with Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw convening with banking leaders to address potential threats, the stakes for the digital economy have never been higher.

The Centre held a meeting with banks to address potential threats –PTI

Atul Arya, founder and CEO of Blackstraw, demystified the technology behind Mythos, its risks to the banking sector, and how India can leverage its unique position to become a global AI execution hub.

Unlike traditional models that simply provide results, Mythos is designed with a core focus on explainability and reasoning. By granting exclusive, controlled access to approximately 15-20 major global technology and security providers (such as Microsoft, AWS, and CrowdStrike), they are using Anthropic's AI model as a diagnostic tool to identify critical software vulnerabilities. However, the same reasoning capabilities that make it a powerful defensive asset also make it a potent weapon.

Arya said that the financial sector remains the primary target for malicious actors.

Harnessing the model's defensive potential while erecting robust firewalls must be prioritised. —*ANI*

JP Morgan downgrades India equities to 'neutral'

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Global brokerage firm JP Morgan has downgraded Indian equities to 'Neutral', citing rising macro risks, earnings pressure and limited exposure to new-age technology, even as it turns more bullish on Asian technology stocks led by Taiwan.

In its latrst Asia Equity Strategy report, the brokerage said that the shift comes as AI momentum strengthens across Asia.

JP Morgan noted that the macro environment is also evolving, with risks of persistent inflation and slower growth shaping investment strategy.

It said the downgrade reflects "elevated valuations relative to emerging marketspeers, earnings risks, dilution concerns and limited exposure to next-gen tech."

The report noted that while India's premium has moderated, valuations remains high. Earnings outlook is also under pressure due to global uncertainties.

JP Morgan further highlighted structural concerns such as heavy equity issuance and limited exposure to emerging sectors. —*ANI*

NTPC to set up 1,400 MW nuclear units in Bihar

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

NTPC is planning to set up two nuclear units of 700MW each in Bihar's Banka district, with an investment of around Rs 25,000 crore. Currently, officials are conducting a feasibility study for these units, located about 250km from Patna. The Bihar government has pledged full support, including water supply, for the project. Estimated land requirements are approximately 1,000 acres, but financial details remain undisclosed. A 1GW nuclear plant typically costs Rs 15,000-20,000 crore and takes at least three years from start to completion. After the feasibility report, a detailed project report will be prepared. NTPC aims to develop 30 GW of nuclear capacity nationwide by 2047, with a target of at least 2GW by 2032. The company is also partnering with NPCIL to establish a plant in Rajasthan at Rs 42,000 crore. —*PTI*

CIL plans strategy to cut 243 MT coal imports

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Coal India Ltd (CIL) is devising a 10-year plan to reduce coal imports by 243 MT through increasing domestic production, quality improvements, and logistical upgrades. The plan will include an audit of current imports and sector-specific policies to promote local supply. It also involves developing the National Washery & Logistics Grid to streamline transportation and coal washing. CIL, responsible for over 80 per cent of India's coal output, intends to engage a consultant to prepare this roadmap, which aims to replace all 'substitutable' imports by 2036. The move supports India's energy security, reduces forex outflows, and aligns with green transition goals. CIL produced 768.1MT of coal in FY26 and aims to reach 1 billion tonnes by 2028-29, with key projects identified for successful implementation.—*PTI*

Marriott bullish on expansion plan in India

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Marriott International remains optimistic about expanding in India, with a pipeline of 200 hotels and plans to open around 50 annually. Despite short-term disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis affecting international travel, Senior Vice President Kiran Andicott expressed confidence. He stated, "We have got a pipeline of 200 hotels today, and last year, we opened around 50." Andicott acknowledged that international travel through the Middle East has dipped but expects no long-term impact, saying, "Hopefully, it will wind down soon. If it doesn't, then it's a problem for the entire world, not just India." The company is focusing on emerging segments such as spiritual tourism, with new hotels in Tirupati, Katra, and upcoming properties in Ayodhya and Vrindavan.—*PTI*

COAI seeks lower spectrum auction price

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Ahead of the next spectrum auction, the telecom industry body COAI has urged the government to lower bid prices, saying service providers have yet to recover their huge investments in 5G infrastructure. Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) director general SP Kochhar said that the industry expects the government to consider the humongous investment made by telecom operators in 5G, without any return on investment. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India recommended that the government put the entire 11,790 MHz of available spectrum in the frequency bands of 600 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz and 26 GHz for auction. —*PTI*

Bowlers floor CSK to help GT get back on track

Gaikwad's unbeaten 74 in vain as Sai steers GT to victory

CHENNAI, 26 APRIL

Bowlers calling the shots in a format dominated by big hitters is a rarity, but that script played out at Chepauk on Sunday as Gujarat Titans exploited a bounce-friendly surface to stifle Chennai Super Kings before chasing down the target through a Sai Sudharsan masterclass to win the IPL contest by eight wickets.

Kagiso Rabada –PTI

Jos Buttler is congratulated by Chennai Super Kings' captain Gaikwad and Jamie after winning –PTI

If the first half belonged to the bowlers, the chase was all about calculated aggression as Sudharsan produced a shining tutorial in adapting to conditions, smashing 87 off 46 balls to anchor Titans' comfortable pursuit of 159. The win moved the Titans to fifth position from seventh with eight points.

On a pitch that had earlier demanded caution, Sudharsan showed how to blend restraint with intent, picking the right deliveries to attack while respecting the bounce on offer.

He found an able partner in skipper Shubman Gill, who made a brisk 33 off 23 balls before falling to spinner Noor Ahmad.

Ruturaj Gaikwad's unbeaten 74 in vain as Sai Sudharsan steers GT to victory over CSK

The Titans' openers laid a solid foundation with a 58-run stand, effectively taking the game away from CSK in the Powerplay itself. Gill looked fluent, mixing elegance with aggression, but his dismissal did little to slow the visitors.

Sudharsan, who had struck a century in the previous game against RCB, carried his sublime form forward, unleashing a range of strokes, particularly against pace, to keep the scoreboard ticking at a healthy rate.

The left-hander's seven sixes underlined his dominance on a surface where CSK's batters had struggled earlier in the day. Jos Buttler played the perfect supporting role, remaining unbeaten on 39 off 30 balls as Titans reached 154 for 1, finishing the chase with 20 balls to spare.

Gujarat Titans 162 for 2 (Sai Sudharsan 87, Buttler 39*, Noor 1-29) beat Chennai Super Kings 158 for 7 (Gaikwad 74*, Rabada 3-25, Arshad 2-43) by wickets. —*PTI*

Shaken Delhi Capitals face a balanced Bengaluru unit

NEW DELHI, 26 APRIL

Hurting from a staggering defeat despite posting 264, Delhi Capitals have little time to recover emotionally as they face another formidable side in defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL here on Monday.

The six-wicket loss to Punjab Kings, a game in which their bowlers were dismantled in a record chase, has left DC shaken.

Placed sixth on the table, they now find themselves in a tightening playoff race where another defeat could seriously dent their chances.

Delhi's campaign so far has been defined by splendid batting but inconsistent execution with the ball.

Their top order, led by KL Rahul, has repeatedly provided blistering starts, while the likes of Nitish Rana and David Miller have ensured momentum is maintained through the middle overs. However, the inability to defend or even impose totals is a concern after a moderate success while chasing totals. Death bowling, in particular, has looked vulnerable under pressure -- something opposition teams have begun to target.

That puts added responsibility on their bowling unit.

Seamer Aaquib Nabi, wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, and skipper Axar Patel himself will need to step up significantly, especially in crunch situations, if Delhi are to plug the glaring gaps that have cost them dearly in recent games.

In contrast, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, placed a comfortable second in the points table, have shown greater balance across departments. The Match starts @ 7.30.PM —*PTI*

Sooryavanshi is my new favourite batter: Australia skipper Pat Cummins

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has earned a "new fan" with his amazing pyrotechnics, and Australian skipper Pat Cummins loves the way the 15-year-old bats. Sooryavanshi, Rajasthan Royals' chubby-cheeked batting sensation who has taken the cricket world by storm, scored his second IPL ton -- 103 off 37 balls -- albeit it came in a losing cause against the Cummins-led Sunrisers Hyderabad. "Yeah, I think he's my new favourite player. He hits the ball so hard, it's great to watch. It's good fun," Cummins, the World Test Championship and T20 World Cup-winning Australian skipper, said after SRH's five-wicket win against Royals on Saturday. Cummins is impressed with the kind of start Sooryavanshi has had to his career. "You've got to be right on the money as a bowler, because if you're not, it's going a long way. So he's impressive. Yeah, he's had a great start to his career, and yeah, I love the way he plays," Cummins said.

Bowling in PowerPlay needs improvement: Venugopal

Venugopal Rao, Delhi Capitals' Director of Cricket, lamented his team's poor catching and bowling in the first six overs after a demoralising six-wicket defeat to Punjab Kings at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Saturday. Despite posting its highest-ever total of 264 for two, courtesy K.L. Rahul's career-best unbeaten effort of 152, DC contrived to go down with seven balls to spare.

Among the flaws laid bare, the fielding lapses were particularly galling. Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh, and Shreyas Iyer, who form the fulcrum of PBKS' power-packed batting line-up, were all offered reprieves that they gleefully capitalised on.

–PTI

India Women beat S Africa in 4th T20I

JOHANNESBURG, 26 APRIL

India all-rounder Deepti Sharma's breakout show against South Africa in the fourth T20I has provided a timely boost ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup, with the seasoned campaigner saying self-belief and tweaks to her bowling helped her snap a prolonged lean patch and return to form at the right time. 36 and match-winning five-for in India's 14-run win over South Africa on Saturday a timely return to form that eased selection concerns ahead of the T20 World Cup in England and Wales in June. Even though the hosts had already sealed the series 3-1 with one game to spare.—*PTI*

India ends ISSF Junior World Cup with 16 medals

CAIRO, 26 APRIL

Hemant Burman won silver in the men's 50m rifle 3-positions, and the pair of Zuhair Khan and Addya Katyal won bronze in the trap mixed team event as India completed the ISSF Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Cairo, Egypt, on top of the table with a total of 16 medals, including five gold, six silver, and five bronze.

In the first finals of the day, Burman won silver after shooting 351.7 across the three positions in the 50m 3-positions event. The 18-year-old had qualified for the final in seventh place with a score of 578-24x and was joined by Vedant Nitin Waghmare and Rohit Kanyan in the finals, who shot 581 and 580, respectively. Rohit finished in sixth place in the final with a score of 311.9, and Vedant finished in seventh with a score of 300.5. —*PTI*

UBER CUP 2026

India beats Ukraine 4-1; Sindhu wins

HORSENS, 26 APRIL

The next generation of shuttlers in Tanvi Sharma, Unnati Hooda, and Devika Sihag notched up wins in their singles matches as India beat Ukraine 4-1 in their Uber Cup 2026 group-stage tie on Saturday in Denmark.

While Tanvi came out on top in a three-game thriller to beat Yevheniia Kantemyr 21-12, 17-21, 21-10, Unnati beat Polina Buhrova 21-19, 22-20 in a 46-minute see-saw clash which went till the wire.

Devika Sihag then defeated Mariia Stoliarenko 23-21, 21-13 to give her team an unassailable lead in the tie.

However, the Ukrainians did win a match as the higher-ranked pair of Buhrova and Kantemyr made easy work of the Kavipriya Selvam-Simran Singhi duo with a 21-11, 21-17 win.

But the experienced P. V. Sindhu — who got some much-needed rest from singles ahead of Monday's crucial tie against China — paired up with Tanisha Crasto to beat Stoliarenko and Sofiaa Lavrova 21-18, 21-15 in 32 minutes, the shortest match of the tie. India began its Uber Cup campaign with a 2-3 defeat to Denmark on Friday, which saw Sindhu win her singles match before getting a walkover in the doubles alongside Crasto. Result: (Uber Cup.

PV Sindhu –PTI

India beat Ukraine 4-1 (Unnati Hooda bt Polina Buhrova 21-19, 22-20; Tanvi Sharma bt Yevheniia Kantemyr 21-12, 17-21, 21-10; Devika Sihag bt Mariia Stoliarenko 23-21, 21-13; Kavipriya Selvam/Simran Singhi lost to Buhrova/Kantemyr 11-21, 17-21; Tanisha Crasto/Sindhu bt Sofiia Lavrova/Stoliarenko 21-18, 21-15). —*PTI*

Bhullar and Pukhraj end joint T-26th in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 26 APRIL

Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar dished out a disappointing final round at the International Series Singapore as he finished the tournament with 2-over 73 and tied 26th on Sunday, after having been in contention for the title earlier in the week at the Sentosa Golf Club.

The four-time IGPL winner, Bhullar, also a 11-time Asian Tour winner, had an early birdie on the second, but in the next seven holes, he dropped four shots. On the back nine, he birdied the 10th and the 17th and the 18th, but also double bogeyed the 15th in his 73.

The top Indian on the final day was yet another IGPL star, Pukhraj Singh Gill, who shot his best score of the week with a 4-under 67 with five birdies against one bogey to join Bhullar in the T-26th spot.

The only other Indian player to make the cut, Karandeep Kochhar (76), also from the IGPL, was 70th.

Korea's Jeongwoo Ham kept the lead for the fourth straight day with a card of 3-under 68 and completed a wire-to-wire win. He was chased hard by Australian Cameron John (66) on a tense final day.

Ham closed with a three-under-par 68 to finish on 16-under and beat John by two shots. John shot a 66 while Spain's Josele Ballester (66),

Thailand's Jazz Janewattananond (68) and Tomohiro Ishizaka (70) of Japan shared the third spot a distant seven behind the winner. —*PTI*

TCS WORLD 10K BENGALURU

Kwizera wins men's race with event record, Florence takes women's title

BENGALURU, 26 APRIL

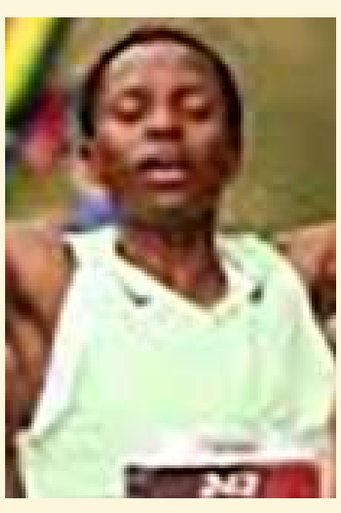
New champions were crowned at the TCS World 10K Bengaluru as Burundi's Rodrigue Kwizera shattered the event record to win the international elite men's race, while Rwanda's Florence Niyonkuru clinched top honours in the women's event here on Sunday.

Thousands of runners turned up on the streets for the World Athletics Gold Label race.

The 26-year-old Kwizera clocked 27 minutes 31 seconds to better the previous course record of 27:38, set by Kenyan Nicholas Kipkorir in 2022.

This was Kwizera's first title at the World 10K Bengaluru after he missed the top spot in a photo finish to Kenya's Sebastian Sawe three years ago.

He had then promised to come back to take the title, and he did just that on Sunday with grit and determination. In the international elite women's section, 25-year-old Florence crossed the finish line in 30:45 to win her maiden title here.



Sawe of Kenya wins London Marathon in world-record time

Sebastian Sawe of Kenya has become the first person to break the fabled 2-hour barrier in the marathon. In a huge moment in sports history, Sawe smashed the men's world record by 65 seconds in winning the London Marathon in 1 hour, 59 minutes, and 30 seconds on Sunday.

The second-place finisher, Yomif Kejelcha of Ethiopia, also dipped under 2 hours by crossing the line in 1:59:41 in his first-ever marathon, while Jacob Kiplimo of Uganda broke the previous world-record time set by Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum in Chicago in 2023 by seven seconds in finishing in 2:00:28. —*PTI*

Clockwise from left: Rodrigue Kwizera of Burundi, Harbert Kibet of Uganda (1st runner) and Gilbert Kipkosgei Kiprotich of Kenya (2nd runner) after winning the men's event at the TCS World 10K Bengaluru marathon on Sunday; A man takes part in the Majja Run (a fun run) and mocks US President Donald Trump as being "divine"; Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah; Differently-abled people take part in Majja Run; A woman strikes a fun pose; Citizens dress up as LPG cylinders to highlight the recent crisis; (bottom left) Rwanda's Florence Niyonkuru who won the women's event -MOHAMMED ASAD